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THE LIFE

OF

FIELD-MARSHAL

ARTHUR, DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

BY

CHARLES DUKE YONGE,

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF ENGLAND," "PARALLEL LIVES," ETC.

29871

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1860.

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DEDICATION.

TO

ARTHUR RICHARD, DUKE OF WELLINGTON, K.G.

My Lord Duke,

In compiling the following volumes my object has been to set before the people of these kingdoms as faithful an account as it was in my power to furnish of the entire career of the most illustrious of our countrymen.

And in availing myself of your Grace's kind permission to dedicate them to yourself, I desire further to testify my great respect for your Grace as the inheritor of his glorious name, and also my sense of the personal obligations under which your Grace's kindness has laid me.

I have the honour to remain,
My Lord Duke,
Your Grace's most obliged
and faithful Servant,
CHARLES DUKE YONGE.

In laying the following volumes before the public the Author desires to acknowledge his great obligations to those who have kindly assisted him in his task; especially to the present Duke of Wellington for his goodness in answering the great variety of questions which he permitted the Author to put to him at different times on points on which he was at a loss for accurate information, and for his permission to print in the Appendix the important Memorandum on the battle of Waterloo drawn up by his father as a commentary on the narrative of General Clausewitz; also to Lord Colchester, for the use which he permitted the Author to make of the very copious and valuable political diary kept by the late Lord Colchester; to Mr. Algernon Greville, the Duke's Private Secretary for many years, for much valuable information concerning his private habits; to Lady Carmichael Smyth, for the valuable sketch of the entire plain of Waterloo, taken in September 1814 by

the Duke's orders, and used by him for the battle in 1815, a fac-simile of a portion of which, with the Duke's own pencil-marks on it, is given in the first volume; to Lieutenant-General Oldfield, R.E., for an accurate plan of, and much military information connected with the battle itself, at which he was present; to Major Hopkins, C.B., of the 43rd, for the beautiful plans of the battles of Salamanca and Vittoria, and for much information respecting those battles; to Archdeacon W. Hayward Cox, for a very interesting letter of the Duke's respecting his election to the Chancellorship of Oxford; and to Dr. Hawtrey, the Provost of Eton, for permission to copy the portrait which the Duke presented to Eton College, an engraving from which forms the frontispiece to this volume.

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THE LIFE

OF

ARTHUR, DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

Wellesley's Family—He is born in Ireland in 1769—Sent to Eton—To school at Angers in France—Enters the 73rd regiment—Is elected member for Trim—Is aide-de-camp to the Lord-Lieutenant—Becomes Lieutenant-Colonel of the 33rd—Serves in Holland—Inclines to abandon the service—Sails for the West Indies, and is driven back in a storm—Arrives in India—Joins the expedition to Manilla—Lord Wellesley arrives as Governor-General—Battle of the Nile—Intrigues of Tippoo Sahib.

THE incidents in the career of its illustrious men, their achievements, their opinions, all the various circumstances which make up their glory or display their characters, have always been objects of the deepest interest to every people. They have been the favourite theme of many writers, the favourite study of most readers; and if such a feeling exists with respect to the celebrated men of bygone ages, much more vivid must it naturally be when excited by the recollection of the renown of contemporary heroes. It will not, therefore, appear strange that an English writer of the present day, whose own memory can recall some of the mighty deeds of the greatest of his countrymen—whose own eyes have often beheld his venerable countenance—whose own ears have often heard him impressing lessons

of sound practical wisdom on the senate of his nation—should conceive the desire of setting before the world some account of his great achievements, his great talents, and his great virtues. Their unequalled splendour might indeed deter him, or almost any one else, from such an undertaking, by the consideration of the difficulty—one might almost say, of the impossibility—of doing them adequate justice, were it not equally apparent that their brilliancy and importance are such as to make even an imperfect relation of them not devoid of interest, while the difficulty of the task is calculated to render success the more honourable; and even failure (if the attempt be only made with honesty and candour) not altogether discreditable.

ARTHUR WESLEY, or WELLESLEY (to employ at once the now familiar mode of spelling the name, though it was not till after his arrival in India that he himself adopted it), was the third surviving son of Garret, second Baron, and first Earl of Mornington, in the peerage of Ireland, and of Anne Hill, a daughter of Lord Dungannon. His elder brothers were, Richard, who for his great exploits as Governor-General of India was raised to the higher dignity of Marquess Wellesley, with the addition of an English barony; and William, who, having filled more than one official situation with credit, was created Lord Maryborough by George IV. His younger brothers were, Gerald, who went into the Church, and Henry, who, having gained a deservedly high reputation as a diplomatist, was also raised to the peerage as Baron Cowley; so that there were no less than four brothers of the same family sitting in the House of Lords at the same time, all of whom owed their position there to their own energies and talents.

It is a singular circumstance that neither the date of

1782.
the birth of the Duke of Wellington, nor of that of his great antagonist Napoleon, are accurately known. The uncertainty existing with respect to that of the French emperor is owing, apparently, to his own intentional misrepresentations; dictated by a desire to show that it had occurred after the annexation of Corsica to France, and, consequently, that he had been born a natural subject of that kingdom. The uncertainty which attaches to the exact day of the Duke's birth arises probably from the great age of his mother, when she first made the statement that he was born on the 1st of May, 1769. That she was mistaken is plain from the register of his baptism, which took place on the 30th of April in that year; and from the report of an election committee of the Irish House of Commons, made when, in 1790, a petition was presented against his return for the borough of Trim, which had taken place on the 29th of April; which petition, among other allegations, contained one to the effect that he was a minor on the day of election, and, as such, incapable of being returned to parliament. It was proved to the satisfaction of the committee that he was of full age on the day mentioned, and consequently, that his birth was at all events not later than the 29th of April, 1769; but, beyond that fact, nothing can be affirmed with certainty, and we must be contented to be ignorant of a matter which, after all, is of very little importance.

When eleven or twelve years old, he was sent to Eton, which his brother Richard had lately left with the reputation of having been the most accomplished scholar in that first of English schools; but Arthur gave no promise of any similar proficiency, and attracted so little notice of any kind there, that, beyond the fact that his dame was Mrs. Naylor, who inhabited the house now

occupied by the Rev. E. Balston, and that his tutor was Mr. Norbury, and a somewhat uncertain tradition of his having fought a battle with Robert, more generally known in after life as Bobus Smith, an elder brother of Sydney Smith, whom he had provoked to the combat by pelting him with stones while he was bathing, no recollection of his career as a schoolboy has ever been preserved; though, like his eldest brother, he always cherished an affectionate regard for the place of his early education; sent both his sons there, constantly visited it, and, in his latter days, honoured the college with the present of his picture,* where it will be for ever held in honour as a memorial of the greatest of the many great men whom that celebrated school has sent forth, fitted by her judicious training to contribute to the renown and prosperity of their common country.

It was decided that he should become a soldier; and, as at that time there were no institutions in England at which a proper military education could be obtained, he was sent to the college at Angers, in France, then under the superintendence of a celebrated engineer officer of the name of Pignerol. It was to his instructions, probably, that his pupil owed the minute acquaintance with all the details of military engineering, which he displayed so remarkably on more than one occasion in India, and in the Peninsula. He remained at Angers several years, till, at the age of eighteen, he received his first commission as an ensign in the 73rd regiment. In the course of the next few years, he exchanged into several other corps, among which were two regiments of dragoons, thus obtaining a personal acquaintance with

* An engraving from this picture, taken by the kind permission of the present Provost, the Rev. E. C. Hawtrey, D.D., forms the frontispiece to the present volume.

1794.

the operations of cavalry as well as of infantry; and, in September, 1793, being aided by the liberal purse of his eldest brother, he purchased the lieutenant-colonelcy of the 33rd, in which regiment he continued without further change till he became a major-general; of which he shortly afterwards became colonel, on the death of Lord Cornwallis; and which is now permanently identified with his name, by having received at his death the honorary title of the Duke of Wellington's regiment.

He had already begun to unite political with military duties, having, at the general election for Ireland which took place in the spring of 1790, become member for Trim, a small borough under the influence of his family, which in the preceding parliament had been represented by his brother William. His return, as has been already mentioned, was ineffectually petitioned against; and he continued a member of the Irish Parliament till he sailed for India.

His parliamentary votes, like those of the rest of his family, were uniformly given in support of the ministry; indeed, he was on the staff as one of the aides-de-camp of Lord Westmoreland, the Lord-Lieutenant. But his speeches were but few, nor were those few of any importance, except as far as they now interest us by showing the identity of some of the opinions of his early youth with those entertained by him in his maturer years. In one we find him, young as he then was, deprecating all violence and party animosity, and recommending moderation and dignity in legislature, in the very same spirit that dictated his own conduct as a member of the House of Lords, when the dignified candour with which he led his party excited the admiration of his strongest political antagonists. In another we perceive his fixed aversion to all theoretical reform, when the

matters complained of by its advocates were felt by no class as a practical grievance.*

He had been in command of the 33rd about three quarters of a year when he first saw active service, being sent, in May, 1794, with his regiment to reinforce the army of the Duke of York, then forming a part of the allied force with which Prince Coburg was combating the French in the Netherlands. The same country, rather more than a century before, had witnessed the first campaigns of Marlborough, though the British contingent was at that time co-operating with the French armies under Turenne, in their fruitless attempt to crush the independence of the Dutch, who made gallant amends for their ferocity towards their own virtuous magistrates, by the indomitable courage with which they resisted and baffled their invaders. They were far from displaying the same resolution now: political disunion had infected their councils, and we have the admission of a Belgian author of no slight reputation, that the failure of the allies was attributable in no slight degree to the want of proper support from the Belgians, owing to the extent to which that people had imbibed revolutionary principles.†

The political tendencies of the Belgians, however, were not the only cause of that failure: the lukewarmness of the Prussian, the vacillation of the Austrian cabinet, and, above all, the incapacity of the commander-in-chief, were more fatal still to a campaign which could only have been carried to a successful issue by union, energy, and firmness. Before the division of which the 33rd formed a part could reach the main army, Coburg had divided his forces, advancing with the Austrians towards Charleroi, and leaving the Duke of York with

* See his Speeches, Jan. 10, 1792—Feb. 25, 1793.

† M. de Brialmont: 'Vie du Duc de Wellington,' c. 1.

1794.
the British and Hanoverian troops on the Scheldt. Some occurrences had already taken place which were destined to coincide in a singular degree with the events of that more celebrated campaign, which, twenty-one years afterwards, was to determine the fate of France and of Europe: in May the allied army had been operating at Waterloo, and it was on the 18th of June that the French army commenced its bombardment of Charleroi; that same town being destined hereafter to behold on the anniversary of that same day the last army of revolutionary France flying in total rout from its last battle-field on the plains of Waterloo.

The latter part of the campaign fell heavily on the British force, which was compelled to retire before superior numbers, and which could often only secure the safety of its retreat by combats encountered under every disadvantage. The first mention of the 33rd occurs in the 'Gazette' of the 21st of September, in the relation of a conflict by which the Duke of York was driven across the Meuse, and which was only prevented from becoming a disastrous defeat by the admirable manner in which Colonel Wellesley handled his regiment, presenting a bold front to the enemy after the Guards and Dragoons, surprised by the sudden fire of a masked battery, had been compelled to make a rapid retreat over unfavourable ground, and had been thrown into confusion by the hurry incidental to such an operation. The presence of mind and prompt skill which he displayed on that occasion procured the 33rd the post of honour on many subsequent occasions: it bore its share in the attack made on the enemy at Tuyl by Dundas on the 30th of December (the Duke of York had returned to England at the beginning of the month); and it naturally formed one battalion of the brigade which was

intrusted to Wellesley with the arduous task of covering the rear of the army in its continued retreat after the passage of the Leck. On the 4th and 5th of January it was again severely engaged at Meteren and Geldermansen, and, with the 42nd and 78th, in spite of the very superior numbers of the enemy, it repulsed them at every point, though they were aided by the excessive severity of the weather, which had frozen the Lingen in front of the British line, and had made it passable everywhere, even for artillery.

The army continued its retreat; and the ordinary difficulties of such an operation in the face of a superior enemy were infinitely increased on this occasion by the unprecedented rigour of the frost, which for some weeks was so intense that it was not even exceeded by the inclemency of the winter which, in 1812, destroyed the French invaders of Russia: the thermometer stood at 20 degrees below zero, and, to quote the language of the General's despatches, the cold "had converted the whole "country into a plain;" thus annihilating its usual defences, which depended on its elaborate system of dykes and dams, and on the means which they afforded of inundating the whole territory, and thus making it inaccessible to a hostile force. Nor was the cold the only evil which our soldiers had to endure: the badness of the roads, the want of sufficient supplies, and even of the necessary shelter at night, pressed cruelly upon them, and added greatly to the labours of Colonel Wellesley, whose post was still in the rear, and who discharged his duties in a manner which, in the opinion of his superior officers, gave sure promise of future eminence in his profession. After a succession of painful marches, the army reached its cantonments behind the Yssel, and, on the breaking up of the frost, embarked at Bremen, and returned to England.

1795.

Unproductive of either advantage or honour as the campaign had been to the nation, it was probably far from being barren in its effects upon a mind so eminently observant as that of Colonel Wellesley—

Sweet are the uses of adversity—

and he was always on the watch to derive instruction from any errors, whether committed by himself or by others. Some years afterwards, we find him sending an inferior officer a carefully detailed account of Monson's disaster in India, because, to use his own words, "it "gives some important military lessons to all:"* and the past campaign was full of such lessons, since a large portion of its calamities was clearly traceable to an ignorance or neglect of the first principles of military science, and nearly all the rest to the defective organization which pervaded every part of our military administration, and to the want of steadiness and discipline in the troops themselves.

But however beneficial it may ultimately have proved to him, the first fruit of this expedition had nearly been most disastrous, since it inspired him with such a disgust for his profession, as one in which his continuance held out but small promise of usefulness to his country or of advancement or credit to himself, that he entertained serious thoughts of abandoning it, and applied to Lord Camden, who had succeeded Lord Westmoreland as Lord-Lieutenant, for a situation in the Revenue

* Dispatches, vol. ii., p. 384. Letter to Colonel Wallace, dated Sept. 12, 1804. Whenever I profess to give the Duke's own words, unless I quote some other authority, I may be understood as citing either the Dispatches or Supplementary Dispatches up to the end of the year 1815, and after that date, his speeches as published by Murray, or (if omitted in that collection, as too many are) found in Hansard. And the passages will be so easily found by reference to the dates, that, as a general rule, it appears unnecessary to refer separately to the authority for each quotation.

Office, or for some other civil appointment of that nature. Fortunately, Lord Camden was unable to comply with his request; and the genius which, had it been "cursed with a granted prayer," might have been wasted in checking the accounts of tax-gatherers, or in planning the details of a still-hunt over an Irish bog, was preserved from such profanation to scatter the countless forces of Holkar and Scindiah, and to strike sword and sceptre from the fearless and skilful grasp of Napoleon.

We may spare ourselves the task of speculating on what would now be the condition of Europe if the energies of its appointed champion and deliverer had been thus unworthily misdirected; but we may derive from the fact a lesson which has already been drawn from it by one who, though far the youngest, has already shown himself not the least sagacious and prudent of the advisers of the Crown; and who, while lately addressing the youths who were about to quit their native land for the scene of Wellesley's earliest glory, took occasion to point out to them from that glory, as contrasted with his still earlier despondency, how great an inducement his career held out to all, in spite of all disappointment and discouragement, to persevere steadily in the path set before them, since his fortuitous and, in some degree, unwilling perseverance was eventually crowned with such success and renown.*

Soon after his return from Holland, he was put under orders for the West Indies, and in the autumn of 1795 he set sail with his regiment for that destination; but the fleet which convoyed them met with such tempestuous weather that it was forced to put back, not without the loss of several ships: the troops were disembarked at Portsmouth, and the next year, instead of

* Lord Stanley's speech to the Addiscombe cadets, Dec. 10, 1858.

1797.

resuming its voyage to the west, the 33rd was sent to India. It was a most fortunate change: in the West Indies the regiment would have had no prospect but that of a dull routine of garrison duty; but now a wider field of action lay before it; and its colonel, whose genius might otherwise have long remained unnoticed, had, almost at once, full scope for the display of those talents and virtues which were destined to contribute so largely to the welfare of the whole world.

Wellesley, however, did not sail with his men: he was detained in England by sickness, but he followed them shortly afterwards, and joined them at the Cape of Good Hope. In early manhood he was far from enjoying that vigorous health which was granted to his more advanced age; and while in India, he was attacked by frequent illness, which, on one occasion, was of so severe a character as to disable him from taking part in an important expedition, and which threatened to compel him to quit that country, and to seek the remedy of a less relaxing climate.

In the beginning of the year 1797, he arrived at Calcutta: Sir John Shore was at this time Governor-General, and Wellesley was the bearer of a letter of introduction to him from Lord Cornwallis, who had himself governed India a few years before with eminent success. Sir John Shore speedily conceived a very high opinion of his abilities, and was equally struck by the fascination of his cordial manners and high spirits. Long after Sir John's return from India, he used to speak of Wellesley at that time as especially remarkable for a union of strong sense and boyish playfulness which he had never seen exhibited by any one else.*

In the August following, the Governor-General pro

* 'Life of Lord Teignmouth,' i., 425.

jected an expedition against the Spanish possessions in Manilla, and Wellesley expected to have had the command of it, for which he made the most careful preparation, hoping, to use his own modest language, "that the "largeness of the force to be sent, the known pusillani-"mity of the enemy, and his own exertions would com-"pensate in some degree for his want of experience." His inquiries led him to contemplate a more extended plan of operations than had occurred to Sir John; and he addressed to him a brief but able memorial, in which he proposed to be allowed to take Java in his way, and to destroy Batavia and the rest of the Dutch settlements in that important island. The command, however, was not intrusted to him: he had himself, with great delicacy, desired that it should be offered to another officer, Colonel Doyle, who apparently, in his judgment, had superior claims to it; but, to his great surprise and vexation, Sir John Shore ultimately decided on giving the command to General St. Leger, of whose capacity Wellesley and others, including the Governor-General himself, entertained a most contemptuous opinion. The accuracy of this judgment was not tested by events, since, though the expedition did sail from Bengal, it proceeded no further than Pulo-Penang, in the straits of Malacca, being recalled on its arrival there, in compliance with the prudent apprehensions of Lord Hobart, the Governor of Madras, that the protracted absence of a considerable force on so distant an expedition might very probably encourage Tippoo, the Sultan of Mysore, to invade the British possessions in the Carnatic.

Yet even this short expedition, as studied in his own despatches, is not devoid of events strongly illustrative of Wellesley's character, and of the principles of conduct to which he owed much of his subsequent success. In

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spite of the evil auguries which he drew of the result of an enterprise intrusted to St. Leger, and of some personal disappointment which he could hardly have avoided feeling, he co-operated warmly with the General, and addressed to him a memorial, full of valuable suggestions with respect to the organization of a force of light artillery, in which we find proofs of that sound judgment, so rare in men of his early age, which even then carefully limited his proposals to what was practicable, and pronounced that an attempt to do too much would cause failure even in what might otherwise be accomplished with safety. Other documents of the same date display that already habitual care for the health and comfort of his men, which was conspicuous in his Peninsular campaigns, and even a watchfulness over their trivial pecuniary interests, strikingly incompatible with the indifference to the just claims of his soldiers, with which he was in later life occasionally charged by those who either did not give themselves the trouble to consider, or who, perhaps, could hardly appreciate his motives of action.

At the same time, he drew up for the Government a copious and able memorandum on the political and military advantages of maintaining the occupation of Pulo-Penang; discussing its value to the Indian navy as a harbour of refuge; its financial capabilities; its facilities for commerce, as a future mart for India and China: from these topics proceeding to a general consideration of the policy of allowing a free trade with India; and (being led to this reflection by the mention of the sugar trade) pointing out the especial value of the West Indian commerce to the British navy at home. Some of the conclusions to which he came, such as that of the impolicy of encouraging his countrymen to become settlers

or proprietors of land in India, may perhaps be questioned and controverted; but there can be no doubt as to the accuracy and extent of the information, or the general largeness of political views developed in this remarkable state paper.

He had already conceived the worst possible opinion of the natives of India, which in many respects has been amply borne out by recent occurrences. In a letter to his eldest brother, he complains that, instead of deserving the character for meekness and tractability that had been often attributed to them in England, "they are the "most mischievous, deceitful race of people he has ever "seen or read of." He has not, he says, "yet met with a "Hindoo who has one good quality, even for the state of "society in his own country; and the Mussulmen are worse "than they are: their meekness and mildness do not exist. "It is true that the feats which have been performed by "Europeans have made them objects of fear; but wherever "the disproportion of numbers is greater than usual, they "uniformly destroy them if they can, and in their dealings "and conduct among themselves they are the most atro-"cious, cruel people he ever heard of." And he attributes their cruelty and falsehood to the absence of any punishment for perjury in either the Hindoo or Mahometan laws, and to "the contempt of death occasioned by some "of the tenets of the religion of both sects, which makes "that punishment a joke, I may say an honour," while the only punishments which they really dreaded, imprisonment or whipping, on account of the loss of caste which they would involve, were for that reason rarely inflicted by our Government.

He was at this time in hopes of his brother receiving the appointment of Governor-General, and this wish was speedily realized. The system of inaction and neutrality

which Sir John Shore had been enjoined to maintain had weakened the confidence of our native allies, while it encouraged our enemies; and it was felt that a strong hand was required to re-establish and preserve our ascendency. Lord Wellesley, to give him at once the title which he earned by his great achievements of the next ten years, and by which he is best known to the present generation, had already, as a member of the Board of Control, acquired a very considerable knowledge of Indian affairs; and at the end of the year 1797, he was appointed by Mr. Pitt to replace Sir John Shore at Calcutta. He arrived in India in April, 1798, and speedily found that the affairs of that country were in a much more critical position than had been anticipated by the worst forebodings of the ministry. Bengal, indeed, was tranquil and safe; but in every quarter of the great peninsula of Hindostan our affairs were gradually assuming a very unfavourable complexion. Our principal allies were the Peishwah, the nominal chief of the Mahratta tribes, the seat of whose government was at Poonah, and the Nizam, or Soubahdar of the Deccan, as he was also entitled, who resided at Hyderabad. The authority, however, of both these princes was but feeble. Both were kept in a state of continual apprehension by Dowlut Rao Scindiah, the most enterprising of the Mahratta chieftains; and by Tippoo, who was eager to find a pretext for attacking either of them, in order to recover the territories which Lord Cornwallis had compelled him to cede them in 1792; while, in addition to these dangers, the Nizam was also greatly under the influence of the French; and Tippoo, though this was not yet known, was negotiating with the French Governor of the Mauritius, to obtain the aid of a force from that island, to support him in the attempt which he had

determined to make to expel us from every part of India.

In these difficult circumstances, Lord Wellesley behaved with consummate prudence and energy. By friendly language, and a frank admission of the justice of Tippoo's claim to the disputed territory of Wynaad, a district to the south of Mysore, he endeavoured to conciliate the discontented and warlike Sultan. Tippoo's language was as courteous and friendly as his own; but Lord Wellesley soon found out that it was only designed as a cloak for the concealment of the most resolute hostility; since, even before his own arrival in Bengal, Tippoo's ambassadors had returned from the Mauritius with a small body of French officers and men, whom they had succeeded in engaging for his service; and he had at the same time sent other ambassadors to Zemaun Shah, the Sultan of Lahore, to induce him to invade Hindostan on the northern side, while he and his French allies were finding us full occupation in the extremity of the peninsula.

As early as July, Lord Wellesley had obtained complete evidence of Tippoo's designs; and perceiving at once, as he wrote to General Harris, that "the option of "peace and war was not in our hands," he determined not to leave our intended enemy the choice of the moment for the commencement of hostilities, but to anticipate the impending attack as soon as he had collected a force in the peninsula sufficient to afford a reasonable probability of success. At the same time, he took steps to destroy some of the support on which, as he had no doubt, the Sultan had confidently reckoned in the Deccan itself. He availed himself of the fears which the arrogance of the French officers at Hyderabad had awakened in the breast of the Nizam, to procure the consent of that prince to disarm the force under their orders. The measure, diffi-

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cult as it appeared, was executed with complete success: the troops were disarmed, the officers were sent back to France, while the British force in the Nizam's service was considerably augmented, and the British influence permanently established in that important district.

While thus preparing for the struggle, Lord Wellesley received the news of the battle of the Nile, which Nelson, with great political judgment, at once forwarded to him, as well as to the Home Government. The Ministry had suspected a connection between Buonaparte's invasion of Egypt and Tippoo's intrigues, and Lord Wellesley fully shared their suspicions, which were afterwards justified by the discovery of a correspondence between the Sultan and the French general. So serious a blow to the plans of the latter could not fail, therefore, of being a great encouragement to the Governor-General; though he still thought it possible that an attempt might be made to convey a French force to Malabar. Tippoo, on the other hand, could not conceal his uneasiness at the defeat of his friends, and occupied himself diligently in repairing the fortifications of his capital, Seringapatam, and in preparing other forts for the reception of his family and treasures; while at the same time he was temporizing with Lord Wellesley, hoping to protract his discussions with him till the ensuing summer, when the setting in of the rains would make military operations impracticable for the rest of the year; but the British Governor was neither duped by his evasions, nor daunted by the fears and remonstrances of the civil servants of the Company, some of the ablest of whom viewed the coming struggle with apprehensions which they did not affect to disguise, and sought to prevent it by formal and vigorous remonstrances.

With a view to the commencement of hostilities, the

33rd were transferred, at the beginning of the autumn, from Calcutta to Madras. Short as the passage was, it was not accomplished without extreme danger, for the "Fitzwilliam," the vessel in which the regiment sailed, struck on a reef, and, in the opinion of Colonel Wellesley, must have been lost if the weather had not been unusually calm. He himself had been at Madras for a short time at the beginning of the year, having been sent thither to inquire into the strength of the military establishments of that Presidency; and on his return to Calcutta, he had laid before the Governor-General several memorials containing ample information on the various topics suggested by the possibility of war, with a detailed recommendation of the measures in that event necessary for the transport and supply of an army, and for putting the whole district into a defensible state, such as might enable it to repel any sudden irruption which might be made, either by Tippoo himself, or by any of the irregular bands of marauders who might be expected to presume on his countenance and protection.

In some of these papers he also discussed the political relations of the principal native princes with us and with each other; the probability of their having a secret understanding, or, in some cases, even a formal alliance with Tippoo: and the conclusion to which he came, from a careful review of every military and political circumstance which could affect the question of peace and war, was, that Tippoo had formed an unalterable determination to drive us out of the Carnatic (a determination which nearly concerned our European position also, since, if we were to lose our superiority in India, there could be no doubt that the French would acquire the ascendency in that country in our stead); and that,

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therefore, if the Sultan were determined on war, it was desirable for us that it should be commenced without delay, before he should have completed his negotiations with those native princes with whom he had long been tampering, or should have received any important reinforcements from France; for it was clearly probable that he would obtain such aid in abundance, in the event of the close of the war in Europe; and to that war Wellesley, in common with the rest of the world, was then anticipating an early conclusion; no one being yet able to foresee the extent to which the genius of Buonaparte would enable his country to protract it till Wellesley himself should terminate it, crowning the career of glory on which he was now entering by his final triumph on the plains of Waterloo.

In papers of a somewhat later date, Colonel Wellesley enters into a full comparison of our existing circumstances and of those of the Sultan with the position of both when Lord Cornwallis failed in his attack on Seringapatam in 1792: he points out that the destruction of Bangalore; the occupation by us of territories which at that time formed part of Tippoo's frontier; and, above all, our possession of a strong force of cavalry, of which we were formerly destitute, had infinitely increased the chances in our favour. At the same time, he urges that the coming contest is one in which we cannot be content with a drawn battle; that anything short of entire success—that is, short of the capture of Seringapatam—will be ruinous to us; and strongly advises Lord Wellesley to come himself to Madras, in order thus to exercise a more immediate superintendence over all the necessary measures.

CHAPTER II.

Wellesley is sent to Vellore—Appointed to the command of the Nizam's troops—Takes the Sultaunpettah tope after a failure the night before—Seringapatam is taken—The booty is given to the army at his intercession—He is appointed chief member of the Commission to regulate the affairs of Mysore.

FROM the first moment of his arrival at Madras, Colonel Wellesley's attention was occupied by duties of a mixed and most important character. His relationship to the Governor-General naturally brought him into closer communication with those in authority than might otherwise have been the case; and his address and prudence, joined to his unvaryingly frank good temper, were of the greatest service in maintaining the requisite cordiality between Lord Clive, the Governor of that Presidency, and General Harris, the Commander-in-Chief, who was inclined to distrust the Governor's firmness and energy; and in inspiring Lord Clive himself, who, in Wellesley's opinion, did not want talent, with a proper confidence in his own capacity and resources. As the winter approached, he was sent forward to Wallajahnuggur, near Vellore, to take the command of the troops assembling there for the ensuing campaign, till General Harris himself should arrive. That officer reached the camp at the beginning of February; and, as soon as he

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had inspected the army, wrote to Lord Wellesley in terms of the highest commendation of his brother's exertions, which in so short a time had established in it "a discipline which did honour to the troops and to "himself, while the judicious and masterly arrangements "with respect to supplies, which opened an abundant "free market, and inspired confidence into dealers of "every description, was no less creditable to Colonel "Wellesley than advantageous to the public service, and "deservedly entitled him to his general's thanks and "approbation." *

The whole of his conduct at this comparatively early period of his life we find marked by the same characteristics which distinguished his subsequent career: we find the same minute attention to every detail which could contribute to success; the same diligence to acquire all possible information; the same careful adaptation of the means to the end; and the same surefooted judgment, which never aimed at an end too great to be attained by the means to be employed. But perhaps there is nothing in his history at this time more worthy of notice than the degree in which he inspired every one who came in contact with him with confidence; confidence in his military skill, confidence in his general ability, and, above all, confidence in his unswerving integrity, justice, and good faith. We have just seen General Harris remark it to Lord Wellesley: we find Wellesley himself able afterwards to affirm, within a week after the capture of Seringaptam, that he had already gained the confidence even of the citizens, who might not unnaturally have been expected rather to regard him with distrust as a conqueror; and, at a somewhat later period,

* Lord Wellesley's Dispatches, i., 131.

we find Major Malcolm reporting to Lord Clive, not only the extent of the confidence which Wellesley had inspired in every class in the provinces south of the Kistna, but also the fact of that confidence being "in a very great "degree *personal* to himself." * The steadiness of character which could inspire a feeling so general is certainly, in one so young, a quality far rarer and more admirable than any brilliancy of talent; and as it was not likely to grow weaker in his maturer years, we may, in a great degree, look to it as the cause of the universal respect for him displayed in the later part of his life by the whole mass of his countrymen, even by those most opposed to him in political opinions.

Tippoo continued his endeavours to amuse the Governor-General with plausible letters, while at the same time he was sending a fresh embassy to the French; but his attempts to cause any further delay were fruitless. The time for action was come, and, at the beginning of February, 1799, General Harris received orders to march upon Seringapatam. His army was very formidable in numbers and efficiency, consisting of 20,000 men, of whom upwards of 4,000 were British troops, and nearly 3,000 were cavalry; and a few days after it broke up from Vellore, it was joined by the Nizam's contingent, consisting of nearly 16,000 men more, led by Meer Alum, the chief minister of that prince, known in earlier Indian history as Meer Abdool Cassim. As he, however, had no military experience, he wisely desired to place his troops under more capable command than his own; and applied to General Harris to be allowed to intrust them to the brother of the Governor-General. As it was a post which could be held by no one of higher rank

* Wellington Dispatches, i., 127.

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than a colonel, his request was complied with: the 33rd was added to the Company's battalions which formed part of the contingent, and the whole force was then formed into a separate division, under command of Colonel Wellesley. At the same time, a force of 5,000 men, under General Stuart, was put in motion from Bombay to invade the north-western frontier of Mysore, and, in some degree, to divert the attention of Tippoo to that quarter.

Wellesley had at the same time important political duties imposed upon him, as the Governor-General, who had conceived a very high idea of his address and discretion, appointed a commission, of which he was the principal member, to conduct the negotiations which were expected to arise with many of Tippoo's tributary chiefs, who appeared inclined to throw off their subjection to him, and to put themselves under the protection of the Company.

It was the 18th of February when the Nizam's troops joined the main army, and when the whole force, consisting of upwards of 36,000 men, began to march upon Seringapatam. They proceeded slowly at first, from the imperfections of the system then in existence for the transport of the artillery and baggage. There was also a great want of money; which, even before the army moved, had been so severely felt in the camp that Wellesley himself had been forced to borrow from the other officers, and actually to sell his own horses to provide the means of sending off two detachments. Provisions too were scarce, and altogether he saw so much mismanagement in every department, that he began to doubt of success, and to prepare his brother's mind for the possibility of failure, rightly judging that the best means of avoiding it lay in the careful estimate

of all difficulties and dangers beforehand. The difficulties were surmounted very mainly through his untiring exertions, and after a time the army moved more rapidly, taking the same line by which Lord Cornwallis had advanced in 1792. The two divisions proceeded in parallel lines, the Nizam's force forming the left column, and met with no resistance. Some small towns and forts, which lay in the line of march, submitted at their first approach, and the few parties of hostile cavalry that were occasionally seen dispersed after a few shots, being sent apparently rather to reconnoitre the British force than to attempt to impede its progress; while the further we advanced the more favourable to us did the country become, since the increasing frequency and thickness of the jungles rendered it more and more impracticable for cavalry, of which the chief part of Tippoo's army consisted.

Tippoo's first blow had been aimed at General Stuart, whom, induced by a heavy fall of rain that he looked upon as a favourable omen, he attacked on the 6th of March; but he was repulsed with heavy loss. Not dispirited at his failure, he turned to the eastward to confront Harris, and on the 24th the two armies came in sight of one another at Malavelly. On the 27th, a smart action took place, the brunt of which fell on the 33rd, and on the Queen's 25th Dragoons, under Colonel Cotton, an officer destined hereafter to share in the glories of many of Wellesley's European victories, and, at a later period, to earn still higher renown as the subduer of Bhurtpore. Again Tippoo was beaten, and driven back towards his capital, having lost above 1,000 men, while our killed and wounded amounted only to 66. Harris pursued the retreating enemy with vigour, and on the morning of the 5th of April, the British army

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arrived in sight of Seringapatam. The city was built on an island in the middle of the river Cauvery, and that river, being of considerable width, though fordable in several places both above and below, supplied a natural defence of great importance. The walls and batteries had been greatly strengthened since 1792, and made the place altogether one of the strongest fortresses in India: in its master's opinion, it was absolutely impregnable. "Who can take Seringapatam?" was Tippoo's boastful reply whenever any one ventured to hint to him the danger of provoking the hostility of the British; and he was quite willing to put the accuracy of his bold question to the test.

Though far inferior in abilities to his father, Tippoo is entitled to a respectable place among oriental princes. To his subjects, though capricious, he was, generally speaking, a liberal and humane sovereign; and his hatred of Europeans, and his ferocious cruelty to his British prisoners, was, in their eyes, only the natural result of the lawful enmity felt by the invaded towards the invaders—in his case, provoked more especially by the humiliation and loss of territory to which Lord Cornwallis had compelled him to submit. To retrieve that loss, and to avenge that humiliation, had ever since been his most cherished object. On the day that he had signed the treaty with Lord Cornwallis, he had exchanged his usual cotton bed for one of cloth, and had vowed never to return to his more luxurious couch till he had retaliated his defeats upon us, and had broken our power. He now flattered himself that the time was come for the realization of his hope, and, in spite of his previous repulses, he awaited our attack with sanguine confidence of success. His army was very numerous, commanded by French officers of proved capacity and courage, and the fortifica-

tions of his capital had been, as has been already mentioned, strengthened by every resource of engineering science.

Harris was not less confident than his antagonist. The very day that he arrived in front of Seringapatam, he commenced operations, and continued them with an energy which was never relaxed till the city was taken. A full share of the work to be performed fell to the lot of the 33rd. The very first night, Wellesley was sent with his own regiment and a native battalion to dislodge the enemy from a grove, known in the native language as the Sultaunpettah tope, which afforded them a cover from which to annoy our troops. The night, however, was impenetrably dark, and that circumstance, added to the unevenness of the ground and the thickness of the jungle, threw our men into confusion, who, at last, being unable to find the post which they had been intended to occupy, were forced to return to the camp without having effected their object, leaving behind them twelve of their body, who fell into Tippoo's hands, and were put to death by him with the most aggravated torture. The enemy retired as well as ourselves, but the next morning they reoccupied the post. Harris ordered Wellesley to renew the attack, and he, having now the advantage of the daylight, drove the enemy from the grove without difficulty and with but little loss.* Wellesley himself

* The incident narrated above has been magnified into an event of some importance by Sir A. Alison, in his generally admirable 'History of Europe;' but his statements with respect to this and to some other occurrences in India have been corrected by Lushington in his 'Life of Lord Harris,' and by other writers better acquainted than Sir A. Alison with the scene of action. In a subsequent edition of his work, Sir Archibald has maintained the accuracy of his original statement, asserting Lushington's correction of it to be erroneous; but there ought to be no hesitation in preferring the authority of Lushington, who was Lord Harris's son-in-law; who was in India at the time; who proved by his extracts from Lord Harris's journal that that officer at the time

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had a narrow escape, having been struck on the knee by a spent ball, fortunately without being in the least injured by it. For some days the army rested in a state of comparative inaction, waiting for the arrival of the Bombay division, which took place on the 14th. And Tippoo took advantage of the respite afforded him to try once more to open negotiations; but by this time the Governor-General had resolved either to crush him entirely, or at least to cripple his resources to an extent which should prevent him from ever becoming formidable again; and, by Lord Wellesley's desire, General Harris now demanded of the Sultan two crores * of rupees, and the surrender of eight hostages for his pacific conduct for the future, four of whom were to be his own sons. To such conditions the fierce prince was not sufficiently alarmed to submit: the negotiations were broken off, and the siege was carried on with increased vigour. Formidable batteries were erected, and were brought to bear on all the most assailable points of the fortress. Tippoo on his part was equally busy, forming intrenchments, and by frequent sallies endeavouring to impede the operations and to destroy the works of the besiegers. Some of his most serious attacks were borne by Wellesley's division, but they were in every instance com-

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thought the failure of the night attack a matter of but little consequence, attributable solely to the darkness, though Wellesley himself was naturally much annoyed at it; and whose account appears to be corroborated by the statement of the affair in the Wellington Dispatches (i., 23-25), and by the Duke's own letter to his brother in the Supplementary Dispatches (i., 115), and lastly, by the slight mention of the occurrence in Beatson's 'History of the War.' It is clear that the Duke himself attributed his failure to the darkness, as the comment which he himself makes on it is that he has learnt from it for the future "never to suffer an attack to be made by night upon an enemy who is prepared and strongly posted, and whose posts have not been reconnoitred by daylight."

* A crore of rupees is a million of English money: a lac is 10.000*l.*

pletely repelled. On the 23rd our batteries opened their fire, and a successful attack upon one of Tippoo's most important forts, made by Wellesley on the 20th, enabled us to erect others within a very short distance of the walls, the fire from which was so effective that, on the evening of the 3rd of May, the breach which they had made was pronounced to be practicable, and the assault was ordered to be attempted the next day. The storm of a fortress in broad daylight is an enterprise that has been rarely undertaken, but it was accomplished in this instance with entire success. General Baird conducted the assault, while Wellesley remained in the trenches with a strong force, ready to support the stormers if his aid should be required. But the assailants experienced no check. Tippoo himself was slain, with nearly 8,000 of the garrison, and in little more than two hours after our troops first began to move out of the trenches, the city was in our possession. Some of the Sultan's sons, and several French officers, were taken prisoners: 900 guns were among the trophies; great quantities of military stores and supplies of every description fell into the hands of the conquerors, with a vast treasure of gold and jewels, the value of which it was impossible to estimate. What in one sense was more valuable still, all Tippoo's papers were found, containing most of his correspondence with the French, and with the other native princes, and affording ample justification of the Governor-General's policy and justice in attacking him.

During the remainder of the day and the whole of the ensuing night, it was impossible to restrain the victorious troops from plundering the city, and scarcely a house escaped; but the next morning, Baird applied to General Harris to relieve him, and Wellesley, as the next officer for duty, was appointed to command in the city. By

incessant exertion and judicious severity, he, in the course of the 5th, put a stop to pillage, restored order among the troops, and a feeling of security and confidence among the citizens.

It subsequently appeared that General Baird, when he asked to be relieved at Seringapatam, was far from desiring altogether to give up the command of the captured city; on the contrary, he felt highly aggrieved at Wellesley's appointment, and expressed his vexation to General Harris in letters which his better judgment in a cooler moment induced him to withdraw. The fact of Colonel Wellesley being the brother of the Governor-General has tempted more than one of Baird's injudicious friends to reiterate the complaints which he himself would willingly have had forgotten. But the real truth was, that the command in Seringapatam was not a purely military appointment, but one which likewise involved important political duties. The entire submission of Tippoo's army, and of the Mysorean population in general, necessarily imposed on the governor of the capital laborious civil functions, for the discharge of which Baird was but indifferently qualified. As an intrepid soldier, and even as a skilful commander, he was entitled to the highest praise, nor did any one do him more frank justice in this respect than General Harris; but his conduct at Tanjore, where it had been found necessary to remove him from his command, had already shown that he was less amply endowed with political prudence and discretion; and his actions at a later period of his life, while Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, which brought upon him the just reprimand of his superiors, proved that he was deficient in that firmness which is, perhaps, above all other qualities, the most desirable in a ruler, and which was wholly indispensable in one invested with the difficult

duty of at once restraining the excited temper of a victorious army, and tranquillizing the fears of a conquered people. In this task Wellesley succeeded perfectly, in a way that called forth the warmest approbation of his military and civil superiors.

After he had become settled in his government, his attention was for some time mainly occupied by political business. Lord Wellesley had determined to restore the ancient Rajahs of Mysore, whom Tippoo's father, Hyder Ali, had dethroned forty years before, and whose family was now represented by a boy of five years of age. At the same time, he resolved to curtail the dominions which were to be assigned to the young prince, appropriating some of the most valuable districts of Tippoo's kingdom to the Company, and allotting others to the Nizam, and to the neighbouring Mahratta chieftains. And for the establishment of the youthful sovereign, the settlement of his government, and the necessary removal of Tippoo's surviving family, whom he intended to place at Vellore, he appointed a commission, of which, although General Harris was nominally included in it, Colonel Wellesley was in reality the chief member. The duties of the commission were onerous, important, and delicate: they had to conciliate Tippoo's principal officers, to settle the amount of compensation—whether in the form of gratuities or of pensions—which they were to receive, to take charge of all public property in Mysore, to collect the arrears of revenue, and, above all, by promise of an ample maintenance, to reconcile the deposed princes, Tippoo's sons, to their removal from their country, and to the loss of their authority. The whole of the arrangements with respect to this latter point were especially intrusted by the Governor-General to Colonel Wellesley's discretion and humanity.

Even Lord Wellesley's expectations of his brother's management can scarcely have equalled the result. The most difficult portion of his task was the removal of Tippoo's sons to the Carnatic. The eldest of them, named Futteh Hyder, declared that he would never consent to leave the tombs of his father and grandfather; and urged that, according even to the precedents adopted by us in similar cases, he might fairly claim to be placed in his father's government. However, by a judicious mixture of gentleness and firmness, Wellesley prevailed on him and his brother to acquiesce with a good grace in what was unavoidable; and all his other arrangements succeeded to the satisfaction of everybody concerned. He selected the ancient capital of the province, the city of Mysore, as the residence of the restored Rajah. The ancient palace had been destroyed by Hyder, but the old musnud had been transported to Seringapatam, and was now brought back in triumph; and the Brahmins having selected the 30th of June as the most auspicious day for the ceremony, the young Prince was formally placed upon it, and invested with the supreme authority, under a royal salute. Purneah, Tippoo's minister, whose fidelity to the restored dynasty was insured by his future interest, being, by Wellesley's advice, appointed to act as his chief adviser; and Colonel Close, one of the ablest of the Company's servants, being established as the British resident at his court.

While occupied with these important affairs, Wellesley had other matters also claiming his attention, some of which were attended with no small amount of personal annoyance. The day of the assault of Seringapatam, Baird had given up the treasure taken in the city to the prize agents of the army: Wellesley, on assuming the command, took it from them; but the Governor-General,

misunderstanding some of his expressions, conceived that he had advanced a claim on behalf of the army to the whole of the captured property as its prize, as a matter of right; and being partly influenced by a most exaggerated estimate of its value,* warmly asserted the right of the Government to grant as prize only such portion of it as he should choose, or even to withhold it altogether. And he expressed himself with some displeasure with reference to the part which he fancied that his brother had taken in the matter. The Colonel, in a very temperate letter to the Marquess, agreed with him in the doctrine which he had advanced respecting the Government's abstract right, but pointed out at the same time that the army strongly and universally believed in the justice of its own claim; and, moreover, that it was apparently supported in this belief by an order issued by Lord Cornwallis in the former Mysorean war, and by the act of General Harris on this occasion, who had restored the treasure to the prize agents after he himself had taken it from them; urging, also, that as the Governor-General had already announced his willingness to grant the army one-half of the treasure, and as he was certain eventually to grant them the other half also, it would be good policy to give the whole at once, so as to preserve for the Government "a fair popularity, "which, in his opinion, is never useless;" pressing on him also the practical wisdom of not wholly excluding from his consideration the belief of its right so positively entertained, and the consequent hopes formed by the whole army. Ultimately, the Governor-General followed his brother's advice, and the affair was settled in the best possible manner; the authority of the Govern-

* Mr. Gordon, paymaster of the troops in Mysore, had valued it at nearly twenty millions of British money.

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ment being maintained, and the troops being abundantly rewarded for their gallantry and perseverance.

His own circumstances at this time caused him even greater anxiety. Of private fortune he had scarcely any. When on the staff in Dublin, he had almost inevitably become involved in debt to an extent that had compelled him to anticipate some portion of his professional income. And he was now becoming a second time embarrassed, through the heavy expenses imposed on him by his appointment to a separate command, with a large staff, without any increase of pay. He declared now to his brother that he had been for many months compelled to spend four and five times as much as he received, while he should "be ashamed of "repairing his fortune by doing any of the dirty things "which he heard were done in some commands in that "country." Indeed, he had already given ample proof of his own scrupulous purity in money matters, having, while at Wallajahnuggur, paid a considerable sum into the treasury for the public use which precedent would have authorized him to keep for himself. He seriously contemplated resigning his command as the only means of avoiding ruin; but at last the representations of General Harris procured him a proper addition to his allowance, and his share of prize money for Seringapatam, together with the generosity of his brother, who refused any repayment of the money which he had advanced to purchase his lieutenant-colonelcy, placed him for the future in easier circumstances.

CHAPTER III.

Corruption of the Indian officials—Wellesley's strict regulations for the Government of Mysore—History of Dhoondiah Waugh—Wellesley is sent to Ceylon to prepare an expedition to Egypt—Is superseded by Baird—Returns to Mysore—Account of the Mahrattas—We prepare for war with them—Wellesley is appointed to the command—He advances to Poonah.

FEW men have been intrusted at one time with more multifarious duties than those which were now imposed upon Wellesley. In addition to his military labours, which were of course unusually onerous in a newly conquered country, he had to make nearly all the arrangements for the civil government of the province, a task for which he had had no previous training to qualify him, and for the execution of which he had to trust solely to his untiring industry, his natural acuteness and strong plain sense, and his innate perception of, and unswerving adherence to the strict requirements of good faith and integrity. It was this admirable union of moral with intellectual greatness that enabled him to triumph over every difficulty, and to discharge the functions thus imposed upon him in such a manner as to satisfy his employers, and at the same time to gain the respect of those whom he controlled, and the cordial good-will of the natives whose bonds of subjection he

was riveting. His difficulties were very great. Englishmen at this time had no idea, as he complained on another occasion, of pursuing any object in India but that of making money, and looked on the newly conquered province as a field the more profitable that it had hitherto been unreaped.

Accordingly, the civil servants of the Company endeavoured to establish a universal system of jobbery and corruption, while the officers of a mixed character, such as the prize agents, exhibited a still more undisguised rapacity, which Wellesley could only check by the most peremptory exercise of his authority. He complained to his brother that they were "such sharks," that they were actually preparing to sell the very doors of Tippoo's palace, and even his old clothes, by auction if he had not prevented them. Still worse than they were some of the military officers: and in several of his letters he speaks in the plainest language of the "rascality," both of those employed and those expecting employment, and also of the indifference with which the General treated the complaints made and proved against them.

He could not put a stop to all the evils which he saw without being thwarted in quarters to which he might naturally have looked for support, and without being misrepresented by those whose hopes of gain he was frustrating: but he held his course resolutely, and, by the most unflinching perseverance, at last succeeded in establishing a very tolerable degree of regularity and economy in the civil departments of the government. At the same time he drew up a code of regulations for the administration of justice within his government, which very strikingly displays his talents even in matters to which his attention could never before have been

directed. No professed lawyer could have drawn a more accurate line between the civil and military courts, nor have more carefully distinguished between the forms of process to be observed in civil actions and those required in criminal prosecutions; though lawyers in that day might perhaps have been less inclined "to prevent a "tedious length of pleading, tending to obscure the "matter in dispute," and may have relished less than their clients the instructions to the judges "to establish "concise forms for complaints, answers, and other plead- "ings in all common cases, which should contain no "more than is necessary to lay the matter in dispute "clearly and distinctly before the court."

In the autumn he was fully occupied in travelling through the province, examining its roads, its fortifications, and the state of the country in general, which was such as to cause him abundant occupation and anxiety.* The picture which in some of his letters he draws of that part of the country while under the dominion of its native princes, is one that may well reconcile the most ardent Hindoo patriot to the blessings of British government. A few years earlier the inflamed imagination of Burke had led him to declare that if our authority in Hindostan should be swept away at this moment, we should leave behind us no more traces of our beneficial occupation of the land than the ourang-outang or the tiger. Under native rule, such were, in some districts, almost the only inhabitants; for we find Wellesley, writing

* His government extended into the districts contiguous to Mysore, on the north and south-west, and one of his tasks was to establish the authority of the Company in Wynaad, on the south-west, where a chief called the Pyche Rajah was disposed to offer resistance, till he was terrified into submission by the formidable preparations made by Wellesley to subdue him; but Wellesley's chief labours lay on the northern frontier, which was more exposed to the attacks of the Mahrattas.

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from Sercey, a town of some importance just beyond the north-western frontier of Mysore, declare that, "owing " to the conduct of the Rajah of Soonda, and of different " Mahratta chiefs, who had made this country the scene " of their predatory operations, there was little in it to " govern besides trees and wild beasts."

One of these marauders, named Dhoondiah Waugh, who assumed the title of King of the Two Worlds, was at this moment ravaging the districts of Bednore, between Mysore and the sea. During the latter period of Tippoo's life, that prince had kept him prisoner at Seringapatam; but on the capture of that city he had been released, and had collected around him a small body of Tippoo's cavalry, supporting them and himself by plunder, till at last he had grown so audacious that he even formed a plan to surprise Wellesley in one of the hunting parties which he was in the habit of making with Tippoo's younger sons, who were still under his charge. Wellesley had early information of the plot, with the additional circumstance that the Peishwah was privy to it; a fact which, though he himself doubted it, Lord Wellesley was inclined to believe, since it was almost certain that Dhoondiah had emissaries at Poonah. However, the Colonel was not terrified into giving up his own sport, though he thought it prudent, in compliance with the Governor-General's suggestions, to desist from taking the young princes as his companions: while at the same time he sent a strong detachment into Bednore to attack Dhoondiah, which speedily drove him into the Mahratta territory, whither, as it was thought desirable to avoid giving the Mahrattas any just complaint, it was not thought fit to pursue him.

As the spring advanced, Colonel Wellesley began to be of opinion that Dhoondiah's force had been greatly

exaggerated by report; but still he expected him to repeat his invasion of Bednore as soon as the rains began to fill the rivers, so as to render our pursuit of him more difficult. By the end of April, his majesty was again in full activity; his band had been greatly strengthened by parties of stragglers whom the hope of plunder had attracted to his standard, and by nearly all the remainder of Tippoo's cavalry. He took a strong fort named Dummul, and advanced towards Savanore, close to our frontier. In June, Wellesley himself took the field against him, recovered Dummul, and, by a forced march, surprised his camp on the Malporba, under the command of his lieutenant, Bubber Jung, took all his baggage and artillery, and drove nearly 5,000 of his followers into the river, where they were all drowned.

Dhoondiah himself was with another division of his force; but he fled on hearing of this defeat of his lieutenant, and his escape for the moment was favoured by the sudden fall of the river, which he crossed near its source, going towards the territories of the Nizam. The respite which he thus obtained was but short: Wellesley pursued him with great celerity; overtook him on the 10th of September, and completely routed his army, now so weakened by desertion as not to number above 5,000 men. Dhoondiah himself was killed; tranquillity and serenity were restored to the districts of which he had long been the terror and the scourge; while a severe warning was at the same time given to others who would have been well inclined to follow in his steps if he had escaped with impunity.

While these events were taking place, and, indeed, before he took upon himself the pursuit of Dhoondiah, Wellesley had received from the Governor-General the offer of the command of the military portion of a force

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which Lord Wellesley was directed to send to the Dutch settlement of Batavia, in the hope of inducing it to accept British protection. It seemed likely, in Lord Wellesley's opinion, to prove a very lucrative command, and also one success in which would much enhance his brother's reputation in England, where great importance was attached to the expedition; but Lord Clive, who had succeeded Lord Hobart as Governor of Madras, apprehended so much inconvenience from his absence from Mysore, for ever so short a time, that Wellesley declined the offer; and ultimately the idea of the expedition was abandoned, since it appeared unadvisable to detach any considerable portion of our fleet to the eastward while Buonaparte continued in Egypt or in Syria.

The death of Dhoondiah, however, induced the Governor-General to think his brother's presence in Mysore less necessary, and he now proposed to give him the command of a force which he had ordered to be assembled at Trincomalee, in order to pass up the Red Sea to co-operate with the British army in Egypt, and, if possible, before its return to effect the reduction of the Mauritius. Into this latter proposal Colonel Wellesley must naturally have entered with great eagerness, since, in one of his first letters which he wrote to his brother after his own arrival in India, and before Lord Wellesley was appointed Governor-General, he had expressed a decided opinion that, "as long as the French had an esta-" blishment in the Mauritius, Great Britain could not call "herself safe in India;" and he gladly repaired to Trincomalee to prepare for the expedition. However, the design of attacking the Mauritius was abandoned on account of the scruples of Admiral Rainier, the officer commanding the British fleet on the Indian station, who did not conceive that his orders allowed him to engage

in such an operation; and Lord Wellesley began to think that the force which it would be desirable to send to Egypt would be too large to be entrusted to any one under the rank of major-general. He had been aware, when he first offered the command to his brother, that it would excite great jealousy among the general officers, who would naturally consider themselves better entitled to so honourable an employment; but, if we may trust his own words, he was influenced in the selection of his brother solely by his opinion of "his superior sense, "discretion, and spirit." We may easily believe that he was in some degree prompted, unconsciously to himself, by brotherly partiality; and yet in so eminent a degree had Colonel Wellesley already evinced these qualities, that we may also allow that a wholly disinterested judge might fairly have come to the same resolution. Still, the rules of the military service were too imperative to be lightly disregarded: orders which were received from the Board of Control fixed the force to be sent to Egypt at at least 3,000 men, and that which was ultimately despatched was even more considerable. To a purely military command, Baird had undeniable claims, which he was not at all inclined to forego: he pressed them earnestly, and Lord Wellesley yielded to his representations, which, as has been said before, coincided with his own more deliberate judgment.

Generally speaking, no one was ever less disposed than Colonel Wellesley to rate his own claims highly, or to desire that any attention to them should influence arrangements for the public business; but, on the present occasion, he felt deep annoyance at his brother's change of purpose. His younger brother Henry was with the Governor-General, as his private secretary; and to him the Colonel freely unfolded his feeling that he

had been undeservedly superseded in a manner which would lead strangers to form an injurious opinion of his conduct. He admitted that he thought that Baird had originally had better claims to the command than himself; but he could not allow that a desire to pacify that officer was a sufficient reason for depriving himself of the appointment after it had once been conferred on him; and he maintained that there was no other possible cause for what had been done, as "there had been no change "of circumstances that was not expected when he was "appointed to the command." He therefore looked upon it as a great blow to his professional prospects, and, considering himself to have been very ill treated, assured his brother that his feelings on the subject were fully shared by his comrades. It can hardly be affirmed that his discontent was quite reasonable. The augmentation of the force to be employed beyond the number originally intended was clearly in itself a considerable change of circumstances; so great, indeed, that the Governor-General, who was certainly ever on the watch to put him forward, never doubted that he himself would coincide in the opinion that it had made the appointment of a general officer to the chief command indispensable; while, beyond all question, besides his own knowledge of the motives by which his change of intention had been caused, Lord Wellesley might well be trusted to take care that no injury was unduly inflicted upon his brother's professional prospects.

If, however, Wellesley did on this occasion allow his feelings to be unnecessarily irritated, his irritation expended itself in one or two letters, and was not permitted in the least to influence his conduct, than which nothing could have been more admirable. The Governor-General, in announcing to him that he was not to have charge of

the expedition, had left him the choice of serving under Baird, as second in command, or of returning to his old post in Mysore; not, however, concealing his own wish that he should accompany Baird, nor his own opinion that the service of the State and his brother's reputation for public spirit and zeal would both be best forwarded by his doing so.

Wellesley would not have wanted a fair excuse for returning to Mysore: Lord Clive urged his return most strongly, and he received private assurances from his brother Henry, that the Governor-General would approve of whichever line of conduct he should decide on adopting. But, as he had closed his first letter of dissatisfaction to Henry with the declaration that, in spite of his disappointment, he had not lost his temper about the matter, and wished to retain no remembrance whatever of it for the future, he now acted up to that declaration, and resolved on bearing his part in the intended expedition, though in a more subordinate situation than he had once hoped to fill in it. He did more: he showed himself as eager to contribute to its success as if it were to have redounded solely to his own credit, assisting Baird to the utmost with all the information which he could collect, and with suggestions and advice, the more valuable as dictated by a more intimate knowledge of the Governor-General's views and wishes than Baird could be supposed to possess. And soon afterwards, having received from Lord Clive copies of letters from the Secretary of State, directing the instant despatch of the Egyptian expedition, for the sake of accelerating operations, he, on his own responsibility, and in spite of the strongly-pronounced objections of Mr. North, the Governor of Ceylon, moved the troops to Bombay, and sent word to Baird that he had done so, that the

General might at once hasten to that port to take the command of them. The Governor-General entirely approved of his decision and promptitude; and Baird, having the magnanimity wholly to lay aside all feelings of jealousy towards him, which the circumstances of his appointment might have inspired, the two officers were acting together with a cordiality which was the best omen of future success, when Wellesley was seized with a fever which, much to his annoyance, prevented him from leaving Bombay, and General Baird sailed without him.

Surely, without being superstitious, we may well believe that Providence watched with peculiar care over the career and safety of one destined to play so important a part in working out its allwise purposes. We have already mentioned the storms which in 1795 turned him back, after he had actually quitted England for the West Indies; and now the fever with which he was attacked proved the preservation of his life, since the "Susannah," in which he was to have sailed, was lost before it reached the Red Sea, and all on board perished.

On his recovery he resumed his position in Mysore, finding for a time ample occupation in superintending the carrying out of the arrangements which he had made for the tranquillity of the province, and watching with at least equal care over everything that could contribute to the discipline and efficiency of the army, which, as he already foresaw, was not likely to be left long without employment. His task was the more difficult because previously military discipline, when the troops were not in the field against the enemy, had been greatly relaxed in India, and a spirit of resistance to proper control had been allowed to grow up even among the superior regimental officers, which at a somewhat later period had nearly produced the most disastrous results. But under

Wellesley's temperate yet firm rule, all inclination to disorder was repressed; even the youngest officers soon saw that, while he was ever watchful over their interests, and at all times disposed to pass over leniently such faults as arose from professional ignorance or youthful folly, he never pardoned such as sprang from a lawless spirit, or from a deliberate disregard of the rules of military discipline: they soon learnt that, humane and considerate as he was, he was not a man to be trifled with, and that himself holding everything second to the conscientious performance of his duty, he would shrink from no severity, should such be necessary, to prevent or punish conduct which would render them incapable of performing theirs.

In the spring of the next year, Wellesley obtained the rank of Major-General, and thus became qualified for more extensive professional command, though he continued for the present at Seringapatam: but events, which he appears to have been one of the first to foresee, were rapidly leading to an issue which would require the utmost exertions of the Company, and the employment of all the warlike resources and military abilities at the disposal of the Governor-General.

During the last century a predatory race, known as the Mahrattas, had gradually made themselves masters of the whole of the central regions of India. From Delhi, which was the northern point of their dominions, they extended southward nearly 1,000 miles, to the river Toombuddra; while the distance from the Gulf of Cambay and Poonah on the west, to the extremity of their territories on the eastern side, was but little inferior. And some of their provinces were among the most populous, fertile, and valuable in the whole of India. The different Mahratta tribes were believed to contain

nearly 40,000,000 of people; and had they been united, their riches and warlike spirit would have made them irresistible. Fortunately for us, this was far from being the case. Ever since the foundation of their empire it had been the prey of constant revolutions; and it was now divided among five principal chieftains, all at all times jealous of, and frequently at war with one another; and especially jealous of the Peishwah, whose nominal supremacy, as the chief magistrate of the Rajah of Sattarah, was not supported at this time by what alone can give real power in such a state of society,—political ability or military reputation. In fact, one of them, Bhoonsla, Rajah of Berar, claimed the office of Peishwah himself, as the lineal descendant of Sevajee, the original founder of the Mahratta power. This claim, however, the other Mahratta tribes do not appear to have recognized; and it was impossible for us to acknowledge it, since, in the time of Lord Cornwallis, we had made treaties with the existing Peishwah, Bajee Rao, and in reward for the assistance which we had received from him in our first war with Tippoo, had given him a considerable portion of the territory which we had wrested from his formidable neighbour; though our relations with him had not prevented us from entering into negotiations with others also of the Mahratta princes, as if they had been, what in fact they were, independent rulers. The subordinate princes of this state were Bhoonsla, Rajah of Berar, who has already been mentioned; Dowlut Rao Scindiah, Jeswunt Rao Holkar, and the Guickwar or ruler of Guzerat. Of these, Scindiah, whose territory included the important cities of Delhi and Agra, was the most formidable; and next to him in power was Holkar, whose dominions bordered upon his, and whom that proximity kept in a constant state of

hostility to him, till the two hitherto unfriendly princes were at last united by their common dread of the rapidly-increasing ascendency of Britain. As yet, however, this union had not taken place. In the summer of 1802, the two chiefs were at war, and a decisive victory gained by either was likely to be unfavourable to our interests. Scindiah had already a considerable influence at the Peishwah's court, which any great success over his rival might render entirely predominant; and as the chief posts in his army were filled by French officers, such an event was one which could not be regarded by so far-sighted a ruler as Lord Wellesley without anxious apprehension. While, besides the fact that the composition of Holkar's army was nearly similar, the views of that chief so ardently pointed to the entire annihilation of the supremacy of the present Peishwah, that it was plain that such a defeat of Scindiah as should place the court of Poonah at his mercy would greatly perplex our diplomatic relations with that city, and with the rest of the Mahratta states. Both the contending rivals professed a strong desire to retain the friendship of the British, and the Peishwah himself, from his fears of both, was probably more sincere than either in making the same avowal. When matters were brought to a crisis by a decisive action at Jejooree, October 25, 1802, in which Holkar inflicted a total defeat on the combined armies of the Peishwah and Scindiah, the Peishwah fled from his capital, and threw himself on our protection, requesting from our resident at Poonah the aid of a subsidiary force, for the support of which he offered to make a perpetual cession of an ample territory to the Company, signing at the same time a treaty of defensive alliance with Great Britain, known by the name of the treaty of Bassein. Even before the negotiation of this treaty,

which was concluded on the 31st of December, his general, Goklah, had also opened a communication with Wellesley, at Seringapatam, asking his advice, and avowing an intention of being wholly guided by his wishes and opinions.

The application for his advice did not find Wellesley unprepared. Above two years before, he had drawn up a long memorandum on the subject of a Mahratta war, expressly because, in his opinion, it was an event which we might look upon as not far distant. And the time which had since elapsed had only convinced him the more of the soundness of those views which he was equally ready to put in practice himself, or to impart to others. Almost immediately after the battle of Jejooree, Lord Clive had despatched an army of nearly 20,000 men to Hurryhur, under Lieutenant-General Stuart, and in February, 1803, in conformity with the advice of Colonel Close, our resident at Poonah, he desired Stuart to send a detachment of 7,000 men without delay into the Mahratta territory.

Wellesley at once saw in this proposed advance an opening for more active employment for himself, or at least for employment in a way more immediately connected with his profession than that in which he had of late been occupied, and wrote to Stuart, begging if that General himself should take the command of the detachment, to be allowed to accompany him "in any capacity "whatever," because "all that was known of that country "and its inhabitants, in a military point of view, was "learnt while he was in it," in his pursuit of Dhoondiah; assuring him at the same time that "he should do all in "his power to make himself useful to him;" while, if Stuart did not take the command, he then requested that it might be conferred on himself. In fact, he had

been already selected for it. The same despatch which directed the formation of the detachment also directed Stuart to place it under Wellesley's command, on the ground of "the practical experience which he had had "on the immediate theatre of the intended operations, "combined with the personal intercourse established "between him and the Mahratta chiefs on the frontier, "and supported by the great ability uniformly manifested "by him in various situations of difficulty." Stuart cordially coincided in the propriety of such a selection, and at once appointed Wellesley to the command, which he assumed at the end of the first week in March, and on the 12th he crossed the river Toombuddra and entered the Mahratta territory.

The force which he had under him was more numerous than Lord Clive had originally proposed, amounting as it did to above 10,000 men, of whom nearly 2,000 were cavalry. He was also to be joined by the Nizam's contingent of above 8,000 men, under Colonel Stevenson, it being wisely judged, since the principle of the Governor-General's policy was if possible to avoid war, that the best way of obtaining such an object was to accompany the intended negotiations with such a display of force as should dispose the restless chiefs with whom they were to be opened to think peace and a compliance with our demands the safer alternative.

For it was Wellesley's diplomatic ability that was in the first instance to be exerted. The Governor-General's object was to restore the Peishwah to his just authority, avoiding, if possible, any war with the other Mahratta chieftains, and, in accordance with these views, Wellesley's instructions directed him to do all in his power to terminate the mutual animosities which divided the jaghiredars, or large holders of life-estates, and to encourage

them to declare in favour of the Peishwah. He himself was sanguine of success, and his anticipations were completely fulfilled. As he advanced, chieftain after chieftain visited him in his camp with assurances of fidelity to the Peishwah, and of their desire to co-operate with the British, till, by the end of the month, he was enabled to inform General Stuart that he had prevailed on all those of the greatest power and importance to lay aside their contests with each other, and their habits of plunder, and to join his army in order to co-operate with him in the restoration of the Peishwah. So numerous were the reinforcements which he thus received that he estimated them altogether at at least 20,000 cavalry, a force before which Holkar found it necessary to retreat. And Major Malcolm, who was accompanying him as the political agent of the Company, in a despatch to Lord Clive,* attributes the willingness of these chiefs to join us wholly to the admiration for, and their confidence in, the personal character of Wellesley; and in this opinion there can be no doubt that Malcolm was perfectly right, for Wellesley himself, writing to the Governor-General, declares that he had observed in the jaghiredars, whose adhesion he had already announced, "Not merely a want "of attachment to the Peishwah, but a detestation of his "person and an apprehension of his power, founded on a "long series of mutual injuries."

In dealing with persons of such vacillating and treacherous characters as all the Mahratta chieftains, promptitude of action was at all times of the greatest importance; and it was more necessary than ever on the present occasion, because Holkar, on retiring from Poonah, had left behind him his lieutenant, Amrut Rao,

* Wellington Dispatches, i., 127.

an adopted brother of the Peishwah Bajee Rao,* with whom that prince was on bad terms, with 1,500 men, and that officer had openly avowed his intention of burning Poonah before Wellesley's arrival. Wellesley's only chance of saving the city lay in reaching it before Amrut expected him, and before he should have time to put his threatened destruction of it in execution, so he pressed on with a rapidity hitherto wholly unexampled in such a climate. On the 15th of April he was joined by Stevenson and the Nizam's troops; and on the 20th of the same month he entered Poonah, having marched the last sixty miles in little more than twenty-four hours. Amrut Rao fled on his approach, and the state of things which Wellesley had beheld on his march showed of what importance it had been to wrest Poonah from his grasp. Brief as Holkar's occupation of it had been, it had been long enough to enable him to desolate the whole country around. For some days our army, as it advanced, did not see one single human being. It was clear that Holkar, if left in possession of Poonah, would have been driven to attack the Nizam, as the sole measure by which he could obtain subsistence for his army and followers, and then, when the resources of the Nizam's dominions were exhausted, the next inroad must have been made on the territories of the Company; but now the danger was rolled back from our frontier, and if war should come, the relations which recent events had established between ourselves and both the Peishwah and the Nizam had placed us in a better position than ever to encounter it.

* In the Supplemental Dispatches, iv., 541, it is stated, "Amrut Rao was the adopted son of the Peishwah's father, Ragoba."

CHAPTER IV.

The Peishwah returns to Poonah—Wellesley advances against the Mahrattas—Lord Wellesley invests him with supreme civil and military authority—Wellesley begins to negotiate with the Mahratta chiefs—He declares war against Scindiah and Bhoonsla—Takes Ahmednuggur—Pursues Scindiah—The battle of Assye.

THE news of Wellesley's entrance into Poonah speedily reached the Peishwah at Bassein, and he at once returned to his capital, in which he was re-established before the middle of May. But even before this event could take place, Wellesley's exertions were required to save one other ally, the Nizam, from almost equal danger, since, on quitting Poonah, Holkar at once proceeded to invade that prince's dominions, and Wellesley instantly sent Stevenson to watch over the safety of Aurungabad and some neighbouring fortresses which Holkar appeared to be menacing. He had little doubt that Holkar and Scindiah, who were carrying on negotiations with each other, would speedily form an alliance; but still he thought that they were both in reality so much afraid of us that they would venture on no act calculated to provoke us to war, such as a regular attack on any of the Nizam's strongholds. A mere predatory incursion was a matter of too ordinary a kind to demand any very serious notice.

Whether Holkar had intended to attack Aurungabad or not, Stevenson's advance effectually deterred him from any such attempt, and he retired from the Nizam's

territory; though Wellesley soon saw reason to apprehend that fresh dangers impended over it from Scindiah and Bhoonsla, who, as he heard, were preparing to invade it, while other reports represented Scindiah as meditating an advance upon Poonah. This Wellesley doubted, though of the result of an encounter with him, if he should advance, and even if he should be joined by Holkar, he had no fear.

The character of the Peishwah, as he became acquainted with it, caused him more anxiety. The astrologers fixed upon the 13th of May as the most auspicious day for the restored prince to resume his power, and on that day he accordingly made a triumphal entry into his metropolis, and took his seat upon the musnud with great pomp; but he soon began to display a jealousy of the influence of the British, and of Wellesley himself, which rendered it very difficult to calculate on his proceedings or to rely on his promises. He was not destitute of quickness and ability, but he was weak and timid, and, like persons of that character in general, was more inclined to trust to artifice and intrigue than to adhere to any steady system of well-conceived policy.

For three weeks after the Peishwah's return, Wellesley remained at Poonah, waiting quietly to obtain certain information of the movements of Scindiah and Holkar; and, if he should be forced into war, not wishing by any premature activity to hasten its declaration, so as to be compelled to commence operations before the rivers began to fill, which might be expected to happen about the middle of June. Till that period, nearly all the rivers in the Deccan are fordable; a circumstance which would of course be very advantageous to an army like that of the Mahrattas, consisting mainly of cavalry. But as

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soon as the rivers were too much swollen to be forded, then, as there were no bridges, no boats large enough to convey cavalry, and as the Mahrattas were unprovided with pontoons, the advantages to be derived from the character of the country would immediately be transferred to an army like our own, consisting mainly of infantry, and able either to cross in boats, or, by means of its pontoons, to throw bridges over the different rivers, so as to have them at once as a barrier against the enemy and a secure path for itself.

On the 4th of June, Wellesley marched from Poonah with nearly 9,000 men of the King's and of the Company's troops, and with about 5,000 furnished by Mysore and by the Peishwah. The Peishwah's contingent was far less numerous than he had been led to expect, and the supplies of all kinds promised by that prince were equally deficient, so that Wellesley declared he should be better off in an enemy's country, and began to distrust the sincerity of the court of Poonah altogether, and to doubt whether, since the protection of the Nizam was manifestly one of the principal objects of the expedition, the jealousy which all the Mahratta chiefs felt of that prince would not outweigh the Peishwah's conviction of his own interest, his fears of Scindiah, and even his resentment at having been so lately expelled from his capital, and his gratitude for its preservation by Wellesley and for his own re-establishment in that city. Nor was the British General better satisfied with the conduct of the Nizam and his ministers. The prince himself was so ill at this time that his death was daily expected, but his ministers impeded our movements by vexatious and unnecessary delays and chicanery, endeavouring to throw upon us even the expense of maintaining some of the native troops employed to defend their own terri-

tories, and declaring that Stevenson had engaged to defray it, though subsequently Stevenson proved from their own letters, not only that he had never entered into such an engagement, but that they never thought that he had. Wellesley, however, was endowed with too clear an intellect to be perplexed by their intrigues and falsehoods, and with too resolute a temper to be daunted by any difficulties, and expressing a firm conviction that he should surmount these as he had surmounted others, he pushed onwards with great celerity.

Neither he nor the Governor-General as yet believed that there would be war, though reports of Holkar's disposition and movements were more than usually uncertain and contradictory. Still, as whether peace or war were to be the result, it seemed obvious that the arrangements for either would be greatly facilitated by the investment of some one on the spot with full powers to regulate all political and military affairs in the Deccan for a time, Lord Wellesley, passing a high panegyric on the "ability, zeal, temper, and judgment" which his brother had hitherto displayed, and influenced also by the knowledge of the great weight which his past career had given him with the Mahratta chieftains, now delegated that authority to him, and at the same time appointed him to the chief command of all the British troops, and of all the forces of our allies in the territories of the Nizam or any of the Mahratta states, subject only to the authority of General Stuart or General Lake, the Commander-in-Chief in Bengal; and authorizing him at the same time to negotiate with any of the Mahratta chiefs for the purpose of promoting the general objects of our alliance with the Peishwah and the Nizam. In order to bring matters to a speedy issue, he also ordered him to demand an explicit declaration of the views of

Scindiah and Bhoonsla, and if their language were not satisfactory, he left it to his discretion at once to proceed to hostilities against them. It subsequently appeared that, in delegating these political powers to Wellesley in such a manner, the Governor-General had exceeded his authority; but even those most disposed to call his conduct in question did not venture to dispute the benefit which had arisen from this step, or the admirable mixture of discretion and energy with which the General had carried out his instructions.

He lost no time, but at once sent orders to Colonel Collins, our Resident at Scindiah's camp, to require Scindiah and Bhoonsla to withdraw their troops from the neighbourhood of the Nizam's dominions; but these princes continued to try every expedient to cause delay, and Collins weakly trusted to the statements of Scindiah's ministers, and by so doing gave them time for further intrigues, though Scindiah had the audacity to declare that he should come to no positive decision on the question of peace or war till the conclusion of his conference with Bhoonsla. Wellesley resolved to put an immediate end to discussions which were so clearly destitute of good faith on one side; and on the 14th of July wrote himself to Scindiah, enumerating the causes of complaint which that chieftain had given to the British Government—his union with other chiefs to prevent the execution of the treaty of Bassein, his military preparations and threatening position on the frontier of the Nizam's territories, and, above all, his statement that he had not yet decided on whether he would choose peace or war; pointing out to him, also, that his situation was actually improved by the treaty of Bassein, since it gave him a more secure tenure of his territories in the Deccan than he had previously enjoyed;

announcing that, in consequence of his conduct, he himself had moved his army to its present camp in order to be in a position to guard against any hostile attempts which Scindiah might make in any quarter; reminding him that, in spite of his doubtful language to Colonel Collins, he had solemnly pledged himself to the Governor-General not to commence hostilities against the Company or their allies, and calling upon him, if he was sincere in making that promise, to separate his army from Bhoonsla's, and to withdraw his troops to their usual stations. Wellesley concluded his letter with the announcement that if after the receipt of it Scindiah did not at once retire with his troops beyond the river Nerbudda, he himself should consider his intentions as hostile, and should at once commence operations against him.

Even now he had some hope that peace would be preserved. There was not yet perfect union between the councils of Scindiah, Holkar, and Bhoonsla, while Holkar's army was at too great a distance to make its immediate junction with that of Scindiah practicable, even if all jealousies between the two chiefs were removed; and Wellesley believed that, if left to himself, and forced to decide at once, Scindiah would not be bold enough to resolve on war. Bhoonsla, however, and Holkar, whose territories were less exposed to Wellesley's attacks, were eager to drive Scindiah into hostilities; Holkar, from his general dislike of both the Peishwah and the Nizam, and from an idea that we were so little informed of his intrigues that he should be able to avoid being seriously involved in the war himself, and that, after both parties had become in some degree exhausted by it, he might, perhaps, like the wolf in the fable, filch some advantage from their mutual weakness; while Bhoonsla's views were prompted by the desire thus to find a place

for the subsistence of Scindiah's and Holkar's troops, which must otherwise enter his own country. No doubt he was also influenced by the recollection of the advantages which the Mahrattas had gained in their former contest with us, and forgetting how greatly our strength had increased since that time, he looked upon a confederacy of three such powerful chieftains, if they could be brought to a hearty union, as irresistible. There were also several Mahratta chiefs of inferior power, at present preserving a careful neutrality, favouring us, indeed, in their secret wishes, as the most able and the best inclined to give them permanent protection and security, but still watching the course of events, and prepared to join our enemies, if they should obtain the superiority. A retreat on Scindiah's part would be such a confession of weakness as would fix these and all other waverers on our side; and this consideration would no doubt not be without its effect in disposing him to listen to the arguments of Bhoonsla and Holkar, and to determine on war.

None of these considerations escaped the notice of Wellesley, and he laid them before the Governor-General in an able and comprehensive despatch, in which he pointed out how forcibly they all showed the necessity of compelling Scindiah to an instant decision; and before he wrote he had already taken steps to do so. On the 18th of July, he had received the Governor-General's despatch, investing him with full political as well as military powers; and he at once wrote to Collins, desiring him to apprise Scindiah and Bhoonsla of those powers; to summon them formally at once to separate and to withdraw their troops; and to announce to them that, in the event of their refusal, he had orders to quit their camp; and further, that on his withdrawal,

Wellesley would instantly commence hostilities against them, for which, as they well knew, his advanced position, and the flooded state of the rivers, afforded him great advantages.

They still endeavoured to temporize, though their ministers so evidently began to lose confidence in the result of a war, that Collins wrote to Wellesley that he believed his requisition would be complied with. They promised "a distinct and pleasing answer" on the 28th of July; and Wellesley wrote to his brother that he believed they would retire, as he had demanded. But on the 28th, they evaded giving the positive reply which they had promised; and the next day Collins announced to them that he should leave the camp, and that hostilities would be commenced. A heavy rain, which fell without intermission for some days, prevented his putting his threat into execution till the 6th of August; but on that day he departed for the British encampments, and as soon as Wellesley heard of his departure, he formally declared war against Scindiah and Bhoonsla, and put his troops in motion.

In numbers he was of course greatly inferior to his combined enemies. Their united force amounted to nearly 40,000 cavalry and 14,000 infantry, with about 250 guns. His own division consisted of scarcely 9,000 men, of whom less than 2,000 were cavalry: Stevenson's division was less by about a thousand cavalry, and of guns he had very few. There were also about 5,000 cavalry from Mysore and from the Peishwah, and the Nizam's contingent of about 16,000 men, which was placed wholly under Wellesley's orders; but as these were very inferior in quality to the troops of Scindiah and Bhoonsla, it was evident that the brunt of the war would fall on the European regiments. Wellesley, how-

ever, felt full confidence that his force was equal to the undertaking before it, and at once assumed the offensive. It was well for Britain that his superior officer was one endowed in an eminent degree with sound judgment and the most disinterested patriotism. General Stuart did not, any more than Wellesley, doubt that the army had a sure career of success and glory before it; and in perfect accordance with the discretion left to him by the Governor-General, he might have assumed the command himself, and reaped for his own brow the laurels which Fortune seemed to proffer him; but (though far from insensible to the honour which thus appeared within his reach) still, considering the experience which Wellesley had gained in his former campaign in the district about again to be the seat of war from the extensive knowledge of the neutral and wavering chieftains which he had acquired during the recent negotiations, and from the influence over them which his former exploits, and especially his deliverance of Poonah, had given him, he judged him better qualified than himself to conduct the campaign; and, with a disinterestedness as truly honourable as the most glorious deeds in arms, abstained from taking the command, aided him to the utmost with supplies of money and means of transport,* and turned back himself to Malabar, where the arrival of a French force, which had recently landed at Pondicherry, seemed to require his attention.

Before commencing hostilities, Wellesley took prudent care to conciliate the inhabitants of the districts which were about to become the scene of them by a temperate proclamation, in which he assured them that, though he had been thus dragged into war by Scindiah, he had no

* See Stuart's letter to the Governor-General, Wellington Dispatches vol. i. (1st ed.), p. 295, date Aug. 8, 1803.

quarrel with the body of the people, and that if they remained quietly in their houses, doing no injury to the British armies, they would be treated as friends.

The rains which had prevented Colonel Collins from quitting Scindiah's camp did also, by the state in which they had left the roads, delay the commencement of Wellesley's operations, but only for a single day. On the 8th of August he advanced against Ahmednuggur, a fortress of extraordinary strength on the river Seena, which, though frequently attacked, had never been taken, and which was now held by an ample garrison of 1,400 men. It had also a strong outwork, or pettah, as it was called in the language of the country, and the troops to whom the defence of this post was entrusted were supported by a battalion of Scindiah's regular infantry, and by a body of cavalry. The pettah, however, was attacked and taken by Wellesley the very evening of his arrival; and the next day batteries were erected against the fort itself with such judgment that they had opened their fire only an hour or two when the commander offered to surrender, on condition of being allowed to withdraw his garrison in safety. This was granted, and Wellesley, having taken possession of the fort in the name of the Peishwah and of the British Government prepared without delay to advance to the Godavery, in order to make himself master of the district between that river and Ahmednuggur, and to secure its resources for the use of his troops.

In the mean time, Stevenson was entrusted with the charge of watching Scindiah and Bhoonsla, who were expecting to be joined by Holkar, as that chieftain had crossed the Nerbudda. Wellesley doubted his intention to unite with them; but even if that should be his object, he made no doubt that he himself should be able to join

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Stevenson as soon; and he was in reality more apprehensive of Holkar attacking Guzerat before the arrangements which he had suggested for the defence of that district were completed.

His own plans for obtaining possession of the territories south of the Godavery were completely successful: Stevenson also, though at first a little undecided in his operations, had, on the receipt of fresh orders from him, moved forwards with his cavalry, and gained some advantages over the enemy, cutting off a large portion of their supplies; and, in spite of being misled by false intelligence into one or two useless countermarches, continued steadily to advance. On this side, therefore, all was well; but Wellesley now had very serious difficulties to contend with from the impracticable temper of Mr. Duncan, the Governor of Bombay, who at one time objected to the measures suggested for the defence of Guzerat; at another, wished to divert a part of the force in this quarter to enterprises for some of which it was wholly inadequate, while others were entirely inconsistent with the Governor-General's orders, and with the main object of the war. So vexatious was his conduct, that Wellesley was forced to lay aside some important parts of his plans, not because he was alarmed at Mr. Duncan laying upon him the whole responsibility, but because the inclination which that gentleman evinced to thwart him in every detail of them rendered their success hopeless unless he could have gone himself to superintend their execution; and at last he judged it necessary to give up the command in Guzerat altogether, and to desire the officers in that district to act without reference to him for the future.

Before the end of August, the course of events appeared to indicate an early decision of the contest. On

the 24th, Scindiah and Bhoonsla, hearing of the fall of the waters of the Godavery (which had taken place six weeks before the usual time), had invaded the territories of the Nizam, and hastened towards the river, which they expected to find fordable, with the intention, as it was reported, of attacking Hyderabad. On the receipt of this intelligence, Wellesley at once hastened towards the river, and sent orders to Stevenson to move in the same direction: but he could not yet succeed in bringing the Mahrattas to action, for the combined chiefs, hearing that the Godavery had again begun to rise, and that Wellesley had arrived at Aurungabad, retired again towards the north; outstripping his pursuit of them, since, in spite of all his energy, he could not make an army of infantry keep pace with one composed almost wholly of cavalry.

In every quarter, however, where they could meet with an enemy, our troops were successful. Stevenson on his march took Jalnapoor, a position of considerable importance, as enabling him to harass the enemy's communications; and on the Nerbudda, Colonel Woodington took Baroach, a fort the reduction of which had been especially enjoined in Lord Wellesley's orders. The possession of this place, and of Ahmednuggur, greatly contributed to the security of Poonah; but Wellesley, resolved to provide for every contingency, reinforced the garrison of that city, and retained General Campbell's division on the Kistna, to check any attempt which Holkar might be inclined to make in that direction, and then continued his pursuit of the retiring Mahrattas with a celerity never before witnessed in that country, and scarcely ever surpassed in the history of war; while at the same time he omitted no precautions, but after the example of Cæsar, of whose Commentaries he was a diligent student, fortified his camp every night. In

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another instance in which he also imitated the great Roman, he improved upon his practice, since, having followed him in his system of crossing rivers in baskets and boats of basket-work, he constructed them in such a manner as to make them permanent bridges, always fortifying them and leaving them guarded, that they might be serviceable to him again in the event of his desiring to return by the same way.* At the same time he endeavoured to separate his enemies, sending Stevenson to invade Berar, and to threaten Nagpoor, the chief city of the Rajah's dominions, under the idea that Bhoonsla, who, in Collins's opinion, was the only Mahratta chief who had any regard for his own country, or who had anything to lose by the invasion of it, might quit Scindiah, and move to the protection of his own territory; in which case, Wellesley had no doubt that Scindiah would be forced to retreat wholly from the Nizam's dominions.

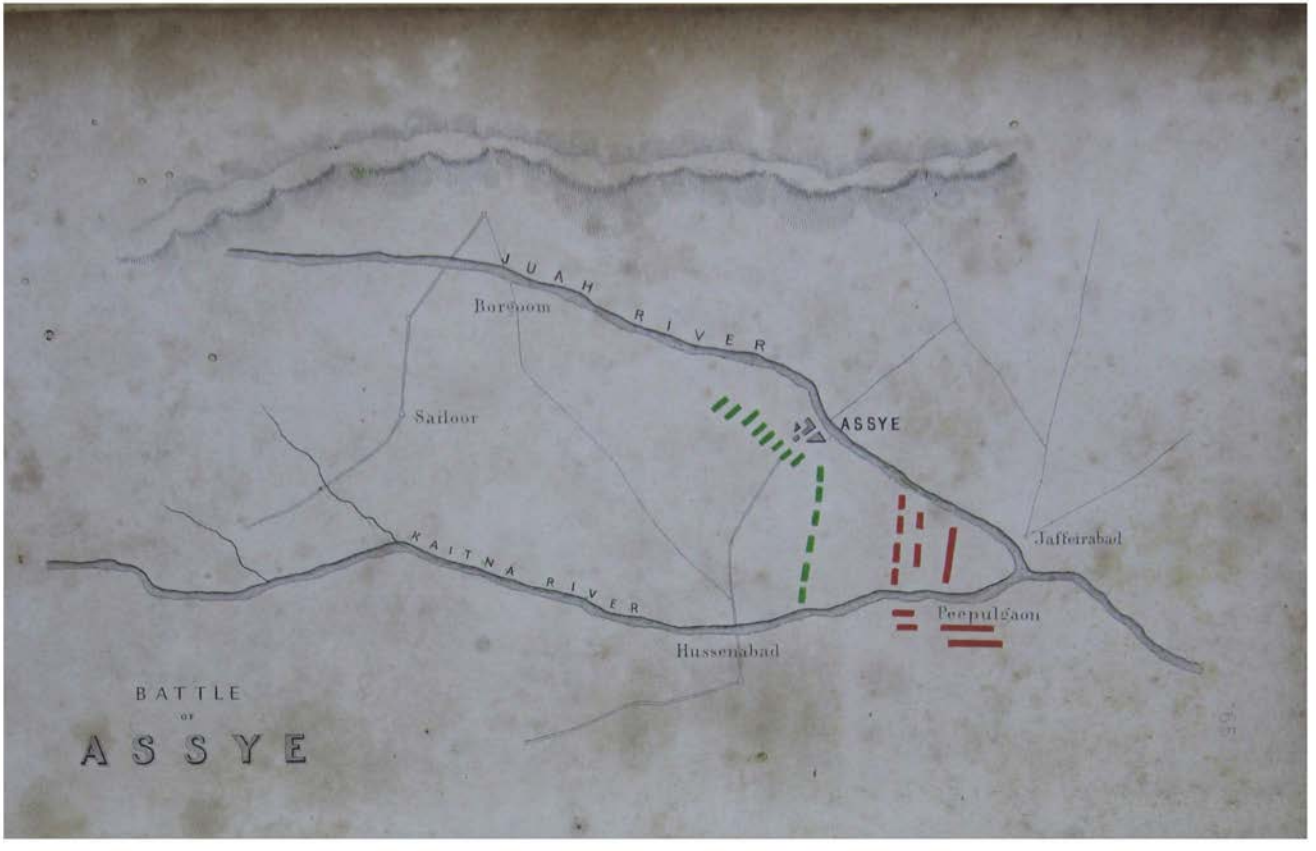
That chief had not, however, as yet been rendered more modest by Wellesley's approach: on the contrary, finding himself unable to plunder the Nizam's country to the extent on which he had reckoned, he seized some of the principal inhabitants of the towns near which he passed, and detained them as hostages for the payment of money which he demanded from their district. Wellesley soon put a stop to this impudent system of outrage, causing some of the relations of Scindiah and Bhoonsla who were still at Bombay and Poonah to be seized in retaliation; and continued his advance with unabated celerity. By judicious liberality he induced one or two of the subordinate Mahratta chiefs to join his army, not so much for the sake of any great advantage which he expected to derive from their assistance, as for that of preventing, by their example, others of their countrymen from joining the enemy. His movements

* Rogers's 'Recollections,' p. 227.

were in some degree retarded by the necessity of waiting for proper supplies; and in the mean time the enemy received a most important reinforcement of 10,000 regular infantry, commanded by French officers, which encouraged them to halt and collect their troops to give battle to their pursuers.

For some time Stevenson's division had been separated from that of Wellesley, and the enemy, not being so much afraid of Stevenson as of his commander, had given him one or two opportunities of attacking their camps by night, of which he had skilfully availed himself, inflicting on them some not inconsiderable loss, and raising the spirits of his men by thus proving to them their own manifest superiority. At last, on the 21st of September, the two divisions met at Budnapoor, and after a brief consultation, Wellesley decided that they should advance without delay against the enemy, so as to attack them on the 24th. The two corps were compelled again to separate, and to proceed by different roads, partly because the defiles which lay between the British army and the hostile camp were too narrow to allow both divisions to get clear of the same pass in one day, and partly from the necessity, as there were two roads, of not leaving either open to the enemy. Stevenson therefore took the western road, Wellesley the eastern, round the hills between Budnapoor and Jaulna; and the two divisions advanced in parallel lines about twelve miles distant from one another.

Accident prevented Wellesley's plan from being carried out exactly as he had designed. As usual, he depended for intelligence of the enemy's position on native messengers, who, unable to ascertain it with precision on account of the numerous Mahratta cavalry (which also made any reconnaissance by a detachment from the army equally impracticable), reported them to


JUAH RIVER
Barsoom
Sailoor
ASSYE
Jaffeirabad
KAITNA RIVER
Peepulgaon
Hussenabad
BATTLE
OF
ASSYE

be at Bokerdun. A portion of their camp did indeed extend to that town, but their left, in which was their infantry, which Wellesley had resolved to attack himself, was posted at Assye, a village six or eight miles nearer; so that when he halted on the morning of the 23rd, believing himself to be about fourteen miles from them, he presently found that he was only separated from them by less than half that distance; and he was told that their cavalry was already in retreat, and their infantry preparing to follow. The infantry, then, he determined at once to attack, and marched forward with all speed; but when he arrived in sight of their encampment, he found this latter information as incorrect as the former, and their whole army before him; their cavalry, as well as their infantry, being posted in a most formidable position, with the Kaitna in their front, a rapid river, only passable at one ford, which they fortunately had not taken the precaution to guard. It was no easy question for decision that was now presented to him. It was impossible for him to stay where he was without fighting. If he should fight at once, he would lose the aid of Stevenson's division, which could not join him till the next morning. If he should fall back, in order to await Stevenson's arrival, and so to carry out the original plan, he was sure to be pursued by the enemy's cavalry, and he might not be able to avoid suffering considerable loss, while at all events a retrograde movement would have a depressing effect on his own troops, and in a corresponding degree would encourage the enemy; and a General who is really acquainted with war, and with the nature of men, will think the encounter of many a serious danger preferable to impairing the spirit and moral courage of his army. He therefore determined on an instant attack.

Fortunately, this ford was on the left flank of the enemy, which, independently of this consideration, Wellesley had selected as his point of attack, since it was there that their infantry was posted, and since that was the arm the defeat of which was likely to be the most decisive. He at once crossed the river, and with his infantry in two lines, and the British cavalry in the rear as a reserve, advanced against nearly ten times his own numbers. Even greater still was the disproportion of their artillery to his, and so admirably was it served, that in a few minutes it disabled the few guns which he had with him, and made him doubt for a moment whether his troops would face it. But the undaunted British soldiers never quailed, and the sepoys proved themselves worthy of fighting in the same ranks: to use Wellesley's own words, they astonished him. By an unfortunate mistake, the officer who commanded the picquets, though ordered to keep his men out of shot, led them and the 74th regiment directly on the village of Assye, and the batteries posted in that village did terrible execution among them, without, however, causing them to waver for a moment. Scindiah's cavalry made a vain attempt to check their steady advance, but Wellesley hurled the British squadrons against them as they charged, when the impetuosity of the Mahrattas proved no match for the disciplined vigour of the British horsemen. For a long time the infantry made a gallant resistance, proving themselves, in Wellesley's judgment, far superior to the battalions in which Tippoo had formerly placed such confidence: but at last they too gave way in all directions, and the victory was complete. On our side it was dearly purchased, one fourth of our whole force being killed or wounded; so that the victorious General pronounced that he should not like again to

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purchase a similar triumph with a similar loss; but that of the enemy more than trebled ours. The use which Wellesley had been forced to make of his cavalry in the action prevented him from employing it in pursuit of the beaten foe, so that he took no prisoners; but he captured 100 guns, and vast quantities of ammunition, stores, and baggage, and great numbers of their troops deserted; so that it was no exaggeration on his part to say, as he did, that while the battle was the most severe that had ever been fought in India, he believed that such advantages had seldom been gained by any victory in any part of the world.

Wellesley's personal exertions and exposure during the battle had been great: one horse had been killed under him, and another severely wounded. And victory brought him no respite: as soon as the wounded men were attended to, Stevenson was sent in pursuit of the enemy, while he himself took the more difficult task of managing our allies. The behaviour of the Nizam's officers was shameful. In spite of the great benefits which that prince derived from our victory, they actually refused to admit our sick into their forts, and not only took no steps to collect the magazines which Wellesley had requested, but threw all kinds of difficulties in the way of his purchasing supplies for himself, which the people of the district were anxious to sell to him; while the authority which he himself had received from the Nizam proved entirely nugatory, as no one attended to either his requests or his orders, and he had no means of enforcing obedience. He had ample reason to say, as he did, that though he might win battles and drive the enemy before him, all that he could do would not save the Nizam's country from destruction if his own servants were not true to his cause.

CHAPTER V.

Wellesley returns to the Deccan—Marches northward against Bhoonsla—Lake's victory at Delhi; and at Agra—Scindiah begins to negotiate with Wellesley—The battle of Argaum—Wellesley negotiates a peace with Scindiah and Holkar—Monson's retreat—Wellesley returns to England.

STILL, though embarrassed and delayed in his movements by these shameful difficulties, he, as usual, made no doubt that he should surmount them; and by extraordinary patience with, and liberality to the natives, and by a judicious distribution of marks of favour and honour among some of their chief officers and magistrates, he was able, by the beginning of October, to place his wounded men in security, and to announce to his brother that he was well supplied with everything, while Scindiah's army was suffering the greatest distress in its retreat.

That chieftain's resolution was somewhat damped by recent events, and at the beginning of October, his minister wrote to Wellesley to request him to send officers to his camp, with the view of settling the differences between him and the Company. Wellesley believed that he was now not unwilling to make peace, but suspected that his request that a British officer should be sent to his camp proceeded from a desire to represent

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us to his followers as suing to him for terms: he therefore declined to send one; and the Governor-General approved of his refusal. At the same time he offered to receive any ambassador whom Scindiah or Bhoonsla might think proper to despatch to him; but this proposal did not suit their views, and he continued his preparations for a further attack upon them with unabated vigour. After one or two marches and countermarches, they turned again to the southward; and Wellesley, who, if the Nizam's forces had been able to defend their own country for a short time, would have preferred disregarding their movements in that direction, was compelled by the weakness of his allies to content himself with sending Stevenson to attack the northern fortresses, while he himself returned to the south to watch over the safety of the Deccan, and to be on his guard in case the enemy should attempt a march upon Poonah.

At first he had unusual difficulty in obtaining intelligence of the movements of Scindiah, and likewise of those of Holkar, with whom, as that chieftain had not engaged in actual hostilities against us, he was desirous of entering into communication, though he did not expect to be able to prevent him from joining our other enemies if he should see a favourable opportunity. Like all other Mahrattas, Holkar was accessible to no consideration but fear, and he was not yet sure whether, if he joined Scindiah and Bhoonsla, his sword thus thrown into the scale might not be sufficient to turn it against us. Stevenson's operations were successful and important: he took Burhampoor, and Asseerghur, a fortress of considerable strength, and the last of Scindiah's possessions in the Deccan. As soon as Scindiah heard of its

danger, he advanced towards it, apparently with the intention of attacking Stevenson; but by this time Wellesley had re-established his means of procuring information, and having early intelligence of his movement, he also, on the 16th of October, moved northward, and prevented Scindiah's progress in that direction; while Bhoonsla quitted his camp, and descended towards the Godavery, in hopes of being able to levy contributions on that district; but Wellesley, having prevented Scindiah from doing any mischief, turned at once after Bhoonsla, checked him, and prepared to carry the war into his dominions.

Yet, while thus securing the absolute safety of the Nizam's territories, he had no support whatever from that prince's ministers; and at last he was forced to come to the conclusion that it was of no use to make further remonstrances or representations to any of them, that he must trust to time to show them their own interests, and meanwhile must do his best without their assistance and in spite of their intrigues. The common people were as bad, willing out of cowardice to pay contributions to Bhoonsla, even though they knew Wellesley was hastening to their protection. It was probably a pleasant relief from these miserable embarrassments to busy himself, on his return to the neighbourhood of his hospitals, with inquiries into the condition of his Assye invalids, with measures for their relief and comfort, and with a liberal distribution of his own stores among them, which excited their own warm gratitude, and the astonishment of those who witnessed such honourable but unusual generosity.

He continued to press Bhoonsla with unabated speed, and now he found the benefit of the unparalleled dis-

cipline which he had established in his army, preventing even his native troops, who had never before had a notion of any object in war but plunder, from committing the smallest depredations. Some of the ground over which he now marched he was traversing for the third time within a few weeks. Generally, one passage of an Indian army through a district completely desolated it; the crops and stores of all kinds being pillaged, and the inhabitants being forced by fear or prudence into flight; but in this quarter the villagers, finding they had nothing to fear from Wellesley's soldiers, remained in their homes, and the army marched as before over plains still productive, among granaries still filled, and through an astonished and greatly conciliated people. He believed Bhoonsla to be hastening towards his own dominions, and he was very anxious to follow him, if he could think Hyderabad safe during his absence. The Rajah's attempts at plundering the country through which he passed had failed, owing to the celerity of Wellesley's pursuit; and one attempt which he made with 5,000 cavalry to cut off a valuable convoy on its way to our camp was repelled by Captain Baynes, who was escorting it with three companies of native infantry and 400 Mysorean horse. Baynes only lost three or four men, and received the warmest praises of his commander, than whom no one ever showed himself more eager to bring the gallant actions of his subordinate officers under the notice of their superiors.

Heavier disasters, however, than the defeat of a predatory detachment had fallen upon the confederates in the north-east. General Lake had stormed Allyghur, a feat which, under the circumstances, Wellesley pronounced one of the most extraordinary of which he had

ever heard, and, on the 11th of September, had routed the force opposed to him under the walls of Delhi; had taken prisoners the general and the principal French officers in Scindiah's service, and had made himself master of Delhi itself, the ancient capital of the Mogul empire. The news of these successes at length made a real impression on Scindiah, and in the second week of November he sent an ambassador named Jeswunt Rao Goorparah to Wellesley's camp to treat for peace. On his arrival, however, it appeared that he was unprovided with the usual written authority to negotiate; and Wellesley, though he believed that Scindiah was now sincere, and that he would be still more so when he heard of a second victory which Lake had gained at Agra in October, refused to open any negotiation till Goorparah should produce the necessary powers. By the 23rd of November they arrived, and Wellesley then consented to a suspension of hostilities between his troops and those of Scindiah; hoping, among other objects, to cause by this truce a division between that chief and Bhoonsla. Goorparah wished to have Bhoonsla included in the armistice; but to this Wellesley would not consent, nor would he allow the suspension of arms to extend to Hindostan, being determined to prosecute his advantages against Bhoonsla without giving that rajah any respite, but to avail himself of his separation from Scindiah to strike a blow against him which should be effectual.

On the 25th of November he advanced in order to support Stevenson, who had commenced operations against a fort of great strength called Gawilghur, and found himself at no great distance from the Rajah's army, under the command of his brother, Vincajee Bhoonsla, whom he resolved to attack. Scindiah had

not yet complied with the conditions on which the truce had been granted to him, of withdrawing his forces to the east of Ellichpoor; and now, when his ambassadors urged Wellesley to forbear to attack Bhoonsla, and received a positive refusal, and a warning that he had no truce with their master either till he fulfilled the conditions to which he had agreed, Scindiah showed his vacillation and insincerity by joining the Rajah's army; and on the 29th their united forces retreated to the plain in front of the village of Argaum, where they drew up in order of battle; and where, in the afternoon of that day, Wellesley overtook them. On the 28th he had been joined by Stevenson, and he was therefore now at the head of a very formidable army, consisting in all of nearly 18,000 men, while that of the enemy did not exceed 40,000, so that they were but little more than two to one; a far slighter disproportion than had existed between the two armies at Assye. They, however, were fresh, while his men had marched twenty-six miles since the morning; nevertheless, fearful lest they should retreat in the night, Wellesley decided on attacking them at once, and advanced against them in two lines, the infantry in the first, the cavalry in the second. The battle did not begin very prosperously for us; some of our native infantry, the same regiments who had behaved most gallantly at Assye, being now struck with a sudden panic at the first commencement of the enemy's cannonade, and turning their backs in disorderly flight. Had not Wellesley himself been at hand, all would have been lost; but as in all his battles he was always to be found wherever the crisis was most important, or the danger most imminent, so was he present now: by great personal exertion he rallied the flying battalions, brought them back into line, and re-established the battle. For

a while the contest was fierce, but not stubborn like that of Assye. All Scindiah's attacks were repulsed, and presently his whole army began to give way in disorder, which the energy with which Wellesley pressed them with his cavalry soon converted into a rout. The battle had not begun till late in the day, and much time had been lost by the misconduct of the regiments above mentioned at first, so that but little daylight remained to the conquerors, and the night saved the beaten foe from utter destruction; but the British cavalry long continued their pursuit by moonlight; some of the Mysorean horse even carried it on for a great part of the next day, and the loss inflicted on the enemy was very great. As at Assye, no prisoners were taken, but what was equally beneficial to us, such numbers deserted the standards of the combined chieftains, that in a few days they had scarcely any army left, while 38 guns, all their ammunition, and a great part of their baggage fell into the hands of the conquerors. Our own loss was very small: not 50 were killed, and scarcely more than 300 wounded, so that there was no alloy to the triumph; to which Wellesley prepared to give additional importance by marching at once upon Gawilghur before the Mahrattas had recovered from their dismay.

Gawilghur was only a hill fort, and, with respect to its artificial defences, not one of the strongest description; but it was considered of great importance, being believed to contain all Bhoonsla's treasure and stores of every kind, and Wellesley had for some time been resolved to take it on the first opportunity. Such an opportunity was now offered by the confusion into which the enemy were thrown by their defeat at Argaum; and the moment that he had established a hospital at Ellichpoor for his own wounded men, he hastened towards it with both

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divisions of his army. It had three gates, but of the roads which led to two of them one was so steep as to be practicable only for infantry, while the second, winding round the fort, was exposed for a considerable distance to its fire, which was likely to be formidable, as the place was defended by an ample garrison and numerous batteries of heavy guns: the third was the northern gate, on the opposite side of the fort to Argaum; and though the road to that gate for the last mile or two was level and favourable, it could only be arrived at by threading the mountain defiles between Ellichpoor and Laboda (a village in the immediate neighbourhood of the fort), and it was plain that the labour of conveying guns and ammunition through these defiles would be very great. Still, as this, though difficult, appeared the most eligible, if not, indeed, the only practicable path, it was adopted; and the difficulties were surmounted by the most herculean labours of the troops, who thought nothing impossible that was enjoined in the General's orders, and who dragged the artillery by hand over mountains and through ravines by roads which they were forced to make for themselves as they went along. So arduous were their labours that, though Ellichpoor is but thirty miles from Gawilghur, they were six days on the march; the attack of the fort was allotted to Stevenson, while Wellesley, with his division and the cavalry, covered his operations and diverted the attention of the garrison by attacks in other quarters. It was on the evening of the 12th of December that the troops reached the fort; but Stevenson began to erect his batteries the same night, and opened his fire the next morning with such effect, that by the evening of the 14th the breaches were pronounced practicable. The next morning the fort was stormed, with very slight loss on our part; that of the garrison

was very great, including the killedar, or governor, and his principal officer, both of whom, despairing of making a successful defence, had killed their wives and daughters before the assault took place. Singularly enough, the garrison, the greater part of which had been engaged at Argaum, were found to be equipped with new muskets and bayonets with the Company's mark on them. Large stores of ammunition fell into the hands of the captors, but their dreams of abundant prize money were disappointed, as, instead of the treasures reported to be deposited in the fort, they found only a quantity of copper money, which did not reach the value of a single lac of rupees.

The battle of Argaum, which made all further resistance hopeless, increased the eagerness of the Mahratta chieftains for peace, which the fall of Gawilghur did not tend to cool. Holkar was the first to admit that he had no choice left but to submit to the terms dictated by the conqueror; and Wellesley, by the authority with which, as has been already mentioned, he had been invested by the Governor-General, signed a treaty with his minister on the 17th of December. The negotiations for the same object with Scindiah proceeded less rapidly, till, on the 23rd of December, that prince sent his prime minister, Eitul Punt, to hasten their conclusion. Eitul Punt was an old man of great ability, and of so diplomatic a countenance, that no surprise, no unexpected triumph or disappointment, ever made the slightest impression on it. Malcolm, who was employed with Wellesley in the negotiation with him, in allusion to a game at cards then in vogue, nicknamed him Old Brag; and Wellesley, recollecting his friend's jest, years afterwards described to him the most notorious of European diplomatists by a reference to it, telling him

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that Talleyrand was a good deal like Old Brag, only not so clever.

However, the ambassador's subtlety of intellect and impassibility of countenance were alike thrown away on the clear sense and resolute will of the British general. Some of the negotiators had recourse to means which were well known to be efficacious in the East, and tried to bribe him. One man offered him 70,000*l.* for early information as to the territories to be allotted to the Nizam, and got a jest for his answer;* another would have given him 50,000*l.* to grant Bhoonsla certain specified conditions, and got no answer at all. At last, on the 30th of December, peace was signed with Scindiah also; and both chieftains probably found that they had obtained from their conqueror easier terms than they had anticipated. For Wellesley was above wishing to give increased lustre to his victories by making them the means of extorting extravagant concessions from the vanquished powers. Taking a magnanimous and farsighted view of the permanent interests of the Company, and of the country in general, he judged it desirable above all things that there should be still some independent native governments strong enough to support themselves in ordinary cases. He insisted, indeed, on Scindiah and Holkar making compensation to the Company and its allies for their past aggressions, and giving them security against future inroads, as the basis of any negotiations; but at the same time he restored Gawilghur to Bhoonsla; Burhampoor, Asseerghur, and the territories in the neighbourhood of Ahmednuggur, to Scindiah; and as the cessions

* "Can you keep a secret?" said Wellesley to his proposed corrupter, Mohiput Ram. Mohiput eagerly assured him that he could; "and so can I," replied the British commander.

which Scindiah was compelled to make left him far inferior in power to Holkar, whom this inferiority was likely to encourage to attack him, Wellesley offered him the option of becoming a party to a general defensive alliance. Berar, Baroach, and other territories of great political and commercial value were surrendered to the Company; the Nizam received an extension of territory which made his frontier more defensible; the Peishwah manifestly gained security from the diminution of the power of those who had shown themselves so eager to subvert his authority; while all future disputes between these different princes were to be referred to the mediation and decision of the Company. Fully was Wellesley justified in the boast that "the war had left "the British Government in a most glorious situation, "as the sovereigns of a great part of India, the pro- "tectors of the principal powers, and the mediators, by "treaty, of the disputes of all."

Peace, however, brought him no cessation of his labours. By the recent treaties we had agreed to give grants of land or pensions to various officers and dependents of Scindiah, all which he had now to arrange. Our military affairs in Guzerat were to be placed on a respectable footing—a task which would probably bring along with it a reform of all our military arrangements at Bombay; the government of the Nizam was to be put on a better foundation; the affairs of the Peishwah were to be settled; and a reconciliation was to be effected between that prince and his brother, Amrut Rao, who, as has been mentioned before, while acting as Holkar's lieutenant, had driven him out of Poonah. All these various and complicated affairs were now upon Wellesley's shoulders, who was at the same time suffering from lumbago so severely that he began

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to fear that if he did not soon give up his tent, and take up his residence in a house, he should become a cripple for the rest of his life.

His greatest difficulty was to manage the weak and revengeful Peishwah. There was no doubt but that the prince had received injuries and insults from Amrut Rao; and, when he returned to his capital he had imprisoned several of Amrut's officers, and seized much of his and their property. The release of the prisoners, and the restoration of the property, Wellesley now urged upon him with great earnestness. War, as he truly said, would be eternal if nobody were ever to be forgiven; and it was too much to expect that he himself would allow the British troops which had restored the Peishwah to his authority to be made the instruments of his petty revenge.

Wellesley had other causes of complaint against him: there was proof that he had kept up constant communications with Scindiah while we were carrying on the war against that chieftain, as his ally; and he was now recommencing, or perhaps it should rather be said, continuing his intrigues with him, and with other chiefs, with whom any communication on his part was even more unjustifiable.

Some formidable bands of freebooters had been ravaging the western frontier of the Nizam's territories; and at the beginning of February, Wellesley, by a march, the rapidity of which he himself considered beyond all example (even beyond that of his advance to Poonah in the preceding year, since he went sixty miles and fought an action in thirty hours), surprised and routed them, taking all their guns, ammunition, and baggage, and slaughtering great numbers of their men. Their chiefs unfortunately escaped, and one of them

was received with honour by the Peishwah immediately after the action. Wellesley's own belief was that from the very beginning their depredations had been encouraged by him, and, indeed, that he and his police had been sharers in their plunder; and he complained with just indignation to the Peishwah's ministers that, while their master was eager to revenge himself on those whom it was on all accounts expedient and reasonable to pardon, a freebooter most especially deserving of punishment was selected by him as the recipient of his particular favour. Bajee Rao also received some French officers at Poonah, which was clearly a step which would have justified any hostile proceedings against him which we might choose to adopt; and it was some time before he could be prevailed upon to give them up. It was doubtful whether there was more weakness or treachery in his conduct; and so indignant did Wellesley feel at the whole of his behaviour throughout these negotiations, that, being compelled to go to Poonah at this time, he resolved to mark his displeasure by not seeking an audience of either him or his ministers.

The magnanimity which he recommended to the Peishwah he practised himself; abstaining from inquiring into grants of land in Malwa that in bygone years Scindiah had extorted from the Peishwah; doing all in his power to tranquillize that chieftain's mind, so as to make the peace just concluded with him a lasting one; on one occasion even opposing the views of his own brother, the Governor-General, in the advocacy of Scindiah's claims to the restoration of Gwalior, as a measure called for by our regard to good faith, and also to policy, "lest people should begin to think the mode-
"ration of the British as much to be guarded against

"as the ambition of other governments;" constantly recommending all his subordinate officers to treat the natives with conciliatory kindness, and when obliged to watch them, never to show that they distrusted them; and making such a display of personal confidence in them himself as on one occasion to put himself in the power of another Mahratta chieftain, Bappojee Scindiah, by going to an entertainment given by him in a fort of which he was the commander. At last, the evident wisdom of his conduct, and his magnanimous constancy, made some portion of its due impression even on the feeble mind of the Peishwah, and before the end of June he had the satisfaction of seeing that that prince's confidence in us was daily increasing, and he began to conceive sanguine hopes that a short time would produce the requisite changes in his system of government.

His own feelings at this time were much hurt by the treatment which he conceived he had met with from his professional superiors at home. From other quarters he had received nothing but honours: the King made him a Knight of the Bath, though the number, which at that time was limited, was full; the Governor-General on all occasions praised his exploits, both military and diplomatic, in the warmest manner; the inhabitants of Bombay and Calcutta presented him with unanimous addresses, attributing "the auspicious conclusion of a "rapid and glorious war" very mainly to "his eminent "virtues and exalted talents;" the latter city adding to its verbal compliments the more substantial and appropriate gift of a superb sword; while the officers of the army who had served under him presented him with a service of plate, "as a pledge of their respect and "esteem, and an expression of the high idea they pos-"sessed of the gallantry and enterprise that so emi-

"nently distinguished him." And these honours, as being, though amply earned, wholly unsought and unexpected, were very grateful to his mind. But the professional recompense to which he considered himself entitled, of being appointed to the staff of the Madras Presidency, which had been granted by the Governor at the recommendation of General Stuart, was not confirmed at home by the Commander-in-Chief, though his attention must have been drawn to it; and Wellesley was so much hurt at this neglect of his services that he felt it neither creditable, nor in any sense desirable, to remain in a situation in which it was even possible that he might be superseded, and he applied to General Lake, as Commander-in-Chief in India, for permission to resign his appointments and return to England. Though this was the only motive which he mentioned to the General, he was also partly influenced in making this application by the state of his health, as he was still suffering continually from lumbago and rheumatism, and by the posture of affairs in Europe, which he thought held out a prospect of service in that quarter of the globe in which any success gives a soldier a higher reputation in England than the most splendid triumphs in India.

Lake, though expressing his unwillingness to lose his aid, at once granted his request, and this permission was confirmed by the Governor-General; but before he could receive their replies, circumstances arose which induced him to defer his meditated return home. In April, 1804, a terrible scarcity, amounting in some districts to absolute famine, raged throughout the Deccan; and just at this time, Holkar, probably encouraged by that state of affairs, began to urge Scindiah to join him in an attack upon us; and though

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he received a refusal from that chief, who openly avowed his distrust of him, many of his other actions bore so hostile an appearance as to make it probable that we should be forced again to make war upon him. So that at the beginning of May, Wellesley received orders from the Governor-General to make arrangements to co-operate with Lake in an attack upon him, and laid aside all ideas of returning to Europe till that service was brought to a conclusion. Into that service he entered with characteristic energy, in spite of the terrible difficulties arising from the want of supplies, which caused him to fear that he should not be able to keep the army together, and to doubt whether it would be possible for him to advance till the rains had set in, and till the new crops had in consequence appeared above ground. But he at once sent Lake a full description of the country, with which that general was personally unacquainted, and of the strength and position of all the troops encamped in it, proposing operations to place Holkar between their two armies. And as soon as Holkar began to retreat before Colonel Monson's division, he despatched Colonel Murray with a strong detachment to co-operate with Monson by any means which might present themselves on his arrival at the seat of war; and he also sent his own artillery forward, resolved to follow it, in spite of all difficulties about supplies, if he should see an opportunity of effecting anything.

By the middle of June, however, Holkar's situation appeared so desperate, and the increasing scarcity made it so impossible for Wellesley himself to undertake any operation whatever, that he resumed his intention of returning to Europe; and in compliance with the instructions of the Governor-General, he broke up the army, relinquished all his military and political powers,

and started for Calcutta. He did not, however, quit the country in which he had performed such important services without endeavouring to secure its future tranquillity; making such representations to the different independent native chiefs as were best calculated to induce them to acquiesce in and to support the Peishwah's authority; and also addressing to the Peishwah himself such arguments as might induce him faithfully to keep the engagements into which he might enter with his subjects or dependents through the mediation of the Company. He also, for the assistance of General Stuart, drew up carefully-considered suggestions for the settlement of affairs in Wynaad and Malabar, not being afraid to travel out of what might have been considered his proper province for the purpose of recommending measures for checking the system of naval piracy which had long disquieted the Malabar coast, and the existence of which he looked upon as equally discreditable to our Government as it was injurious to the prosperity of our western settlements.

In July he reached Seringapatam, from which city he sent the Governor-General a full account of the condition of Mysore, upon which he congratulated his brother as being most satisfactory and creditable to his liberal and large-minded principles of government, though, in fact, the greater part of them had been originally suggested and applied by himself; but he was never anxious to put himself forward, nor to assume any credit to himself to which others could by any possibility lay claim; and shortly afterwards he set sail from Madras, and in the second week of August he landed in Calcutta.

He had hardly arrived there when he began to think it probable that he should be forced to return to the Deccan. Monson, encouraged by Holkar's retreat before

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him, and persuaded by the entreaties of some of the inferior rajahs, who were desirous of the protection of our troops, advanced much further than his orders justified, and took one or two important forts. He soon, however, found that his provisions were falling short, while Murray, who had been sent to support him with a detachment so powerful as to amount to an army, had, after advancing a short distance, begun to retreat without any apparent reason except a dread of Holkar's superior numbers. Monson also began to retire, and was instantly pressed by Holkar with great skill and vigour. So completely had he mismanaged everything, that, in Wellesley's opinion, he must have met with great disasters even if Holkar had not attacked him at all. As it was, in spite of the admirable conduct of the troops themselves, who behaved with the most patient gallantry amid circumstances of unprecedented discouragement, nine-tenths of his division perished in the retreat, and on the 30th of August, reached Agra with scarcely 1000 men, in a state of utter destitution, having lost his artillery, baggage, and everything that distinguishes an army from a rabble.

It is a characteristic proof of Wellesley's ever-observant genius and of his invariable modesty, that, though he had never suffered any reverse himself, and though, from his consummate prudence and calmness of mind, he was peculiarly unlikely to commit Monson's great faults of advancing without an object and retreating without a reason, yet, in sending a full account of the disaster to Colonel Wallace, whom he had left in command at Poonah, he gives as his reason for the minute enumeration of details which he furnished to him, that "they give some important lessons to them all." And the lessons which he proceeded to deduce from them,

and especially his conclusions of what Monson ought to have done, are so striking in themselves, and so lucidly set forth, that the greatest of his pupils, the gallant conqueror of Scinde, ascribed his own conduct which led to the battle of Meeanee to his recollection of this letter, and to his having acted up to the principles there laid down.*

Wellesley, therefore, prepared to return to Madras to rejoin the army, and wrote to that Presidency to beg to have a cavalry force ready to advance with him the moment he arrived, as he "purposed not to allow the "grass to grow under his feet." He wrote also to Murray, desiring him to take care to have his division well supplied with provisions: but these plans were not carried into execution. Lake did not appear to wish him to join the army under his command, probably feeling himself, as he proved, fully equal to the coming contest, in which, having compelled Holkar to raise the siege of Delhi, which he had begun in October, he pursued him with his whole force. On the 13th of November, General Fraser, with one division, gave one of his lieutenants a total defeat under the walls of Dieg, and four days afterwards, Lake routed Holkar himself at Furruckabad, and by these repeated victories put it wholly out of his power to be any longer formidable.

Wellesley, therefore, when he returned to Madras in November, did so rather lest any emergencies should arise to render his presence there requisite than in consequence of any such necessity actually existing; and, sharing in this view, the Governor-General again invested him with the ample military and political powers which he had enjoyed before. If he had any definite

* See 'Memoirs of Sir C. Napier,' ii., 328; letter from Sir C. Napier to Lord Fitzroy Somerset.

object, it was to prevent Scindiah and Bhoonsla from allying themselves with Holkar, which, in spite of their treaties with the Company, they were willing enough to do. Neither his military nor political authority was called into action. It was a very unhealthy season in India; several of the ablest servants of the Company were disabled by illness, and Wellesley was seized with a severe attack of fever and ague, which, however, if we may judge from his voluminous correspondence at this time, he scarcely permitted to interfere with his exertions in making such arrangements as should effectually prevent Holkar from obtaining any accession of strength among the southern Mahratta chiefs, and in putting our own forces in the peninsula in a state of readiness for any operations that might become desirable.

By the beginning, however, of the year 1805, the crisis appeared to be past, and he resumed his idea of returning to England. The treatment which he had received in respect of his appointment on the staff yet rankled in his mind, and though he declared that he was not very ambitious, he still considered that he had been ill used both by the directors of the Company and by the ministers of the King; in fact, if General Fraser had not unfortunately died of a wound which he received at Dieg, he would at this time have been a supernumerary without any appointment at all which would have been recognized by the authorities at home. He decided, therefore, that neither the Company nor the Ministry had any claim upon him sufficient to induce him to remain any longer in India, which was probably contrary to his interest, and certainly prejudicial to his health. And he also thought that he might be of service at home, by being on the spot to give verbal explanations to those in power on the subject of the alterations which

had recently taken place in the military establishments in India, and of other matters with regard to which very erroneous notions prevailed. This last consideration was not a mere excuse, as we learn from Malcolm's correspondence that he and others intimately acquainted with the affairs of India, and with home politics as far as they bore upon those affairs, considered Wellesley's presence in England very desirable at that time in reference to them. But the feelings of pique at the slight which he considered had been put upon him were probably stimulated, I may almost say engendered, by the state of his health, which was far from good. In fact, he was debilitated and in some degree unnerved by a slow fever, or else we may be sure, from his conduct on a previous occasion, as already mentioned, and at other times in subsequent years, that he would never have permitted any consideration of the treatment he received from others for a moment to influence his public conduct.

The country was not, indeed, in his opinion, in a state of perfect tranquillity, for he esteemed Holkar still formidable as the head of all the freebooters and vagrant bands of marauders scattered over India, and he pronounced that as long as that chief existed at all, we could not look on the territories of our allies, nor even on our own, as secure: but he thought justly that his power was now so much broken that those who remained were perfectly able to deal with him, while he had no doubt that Scindiah and Bhoonsla were now resolved to remain at peace with us. He therefore again applied to the Governor-General for leave to resign the powers with which he had recently been reinvested; and by the end of January he received permission to do so. He remained for a short time at Seringapatam, making arrangements

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for the future distribution of the troops belonging to the two Presidencies of Bombay and Madras which had been under his command; giving those who were to succeed to portions of his authority full information concerning his own past operations, and aiding them with his opinions and with lessons which he had derived from his extensive experience of the country and the natives, and taking all the steps necessary for leaving everything belonging to the different departments with which he had been connected in such order as should, as far as possible, prevent any inconvenience from being caused by his departure.

That departure, however, was viewed with great concern by all from whom it was about to separate him; and it called forth testimonials of their regret for it, and of their esteem for and admiration of his character almost unprecedented, if we recollect that the individual who had earned them was not yet six-and-thirty years of age. The 33rd, which he had but lately ceased to command, on becoming a Major-General, unanimously thanked him for the friendly and paternal attention which he had ever paid to their interests, and for his unremitting vigilance for their welfare. The officers of the army and of the garrison of Seringapatam approached him with similar sentiments. The European inhabitants and native military officers of the Presidency of Fort St. George (as the government of Madras was then called) begged him to allow his picture to be placed in the large room of their Exchange. The native inhabitants of Seringapatam, who had likewise in the previous year presented an address to him, expressive of their thankfulness "to the preserving God, who had brought "him back in safety" from the campaign of Assye and Argaum, and whose gratitude had been excited by the

feeling that "even during his absence in the midst of "battle and of victory, his care for their prosperity had "been extended to them in as ample a manner as if no "other object had occupied his mind," now again addressed him to express "their deep regret at hearing "of his approaching departure;" their "gratitude for "the tranquillity, security, and happiness which they "had enjoyed under his auspicious protection, their "respect for his brilliant exploits, which strengthened "the foundation of that tranquillity, and their reverence "for his benevolence and affability." And the Governor-General in Council addressed to him a public letter, recording the sense which he and the Council entertained of the important services which he had rendered to his country by his achievements in that remote quarter of the world. His replies to all these addresses, deeply gratifying as their unanimity and his own feeling that he had honourably earned them must have rendered them, were singularly affectionate and impressive. Of his regiment he took leave as an affectionate friend, gladly recording his long and intimate acquaintance with its officers, assuring them of his constant remembrance of their services, and of his continued desire at all times to forward their views; adding a characteristic recommendation, which came with peculiar force from one who was such an eminent example of the qualities he recommended, "to adhere to that system of "discipline, subordination, and interior economy which "they had found established in the regiment, and above "all, to cherish and encourage among themselves the "spirit of gentlemen and of soldiers," titles which, by thus uniting them, he clearly intimated to them they ought at all times to consider inseparable and identical. He impressed the same admonition on the officers of the

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army at large in the general order which he issued on taking leave of them and resigning his command, assuring them that "the spirit and sentiments of "gentlemen and soldiers are the most certain road to "the achievement of everything that is great in their "profession." In this, his parting order, he gave a graceful praise to the great services his troops had performed, and to the steadiness and perseverance with which they had surmounted their various and great difficulties, and gratefully acknowledging the assistance which he himself had received from the officers of all ranks, and especially from some of the staff, whom he distinguished by name. And in the middle of March, 1805, he set sail for England, from which he had been absent nearly nine years. He had quitted it a young officer, unknown except to his immediate superiors. He returned to it, while still a young man, having equalled the achievements of the greatest captains who had ever fought in India; having already acquired great military glory, and what was more, having, by the admirable integrity, good faith, and humanity which he had on all occasions displayed, greatly raised the opinions which the native Indians had hitherto entertained of his countrymen in general.

These great achievements were not wrought, nor these admirable effects produced, but by the very same qualities of genius and virtue which, in their more mature and full development, enabled him to perform still greater deeds, and to diffuse still more widely that confidence in himself and his nation, which produced lasting effects on the state of Europe and of the world. The prompt decision which led to the battle of Assye, his admirable handling of his troops under circumstances of difficulty and dismay at Argaum, the difficult march over

the mountains and rapid capture of Gawilghur, are but types foreshadowing in many of their circumstances, as well as in their results, the future triumphs of Salamanca and Orthez, and the wonderful descent upon and storm of Badajoz. Again, the consideration which he showed for the non-military natives of the countries against whose chiefs he was making war, the strict order and discipline which he preserved among his troops, and the entire absence from pillage which he enforced, even among soldiers who had hitherto been used to look upon plunder as the sole object of warfare, and in whom, in consequence, predatory habits were so deeply ingrained that nothing but the rigorous discipline which he had introduced prevented them, as he himself expressed it, from stripping his own coat off his back, were all faithfully reproduced in those glorious campaigns which led him from the coasts of the Atlantic into the heart of France, and enabled him to win the hearty affection of the Portuguese, to conquer, though slowly, the obstinacy and arrogance of the Spaniard, and even to inspire the southern Frenchmen with such confidence in his probity and humanity, that while they dreaded the armies of their own countrymen as rapacious enemies, they looked on the invading English as friends, and often as protectors.

Of his own troops he had deservedly gained the affection by the same constant desire which he displayed in later times to spare their blood, to provide for their welfare and comfort, especially when sick or wounded, postponing even the prosecution of a victory to the establishment of hospitals for those by whose labours and sufferings it had been won; watching over the interests of his officers in every way, by taking every occasion to bring forward their services into notice, urging their

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promotion often as a favour to himself, and that not from motives of personal intimacy or friendship, but because, in his own words, "their services gave them "undoubted claims upon him." * Even to those whose misconduct disentitled them to any favourable notice, he constantly showed himself a most merciful and indulgent judge, often endeavouring to save them from courts-martial whenever their errors appeared to arise from the inconsiderate folly of youth and ignorance of the strict requirements and at the same time of the value of rigid military discipline; while when, as was sometimes the case, they had their origin in a deliberately insubordinate and lawless spirit, for such he had no indulgence himself, and to such he recommended the commanding-officers of regiments to show no mercy, but to crush it at once, "never passing over the slightest fault."

In one instance, on publishing the sentence of a court-martial, he laid down a general principle, which is deserving of notice, as marking with great precision the cases in which an officer in subordinate command is at liberty to depart from the strict letter of his orders: "It may "frequently happen," says he in a general order, "that "an order may be given to an officer, which, from cir-"cumstances not known to the person who gave it at "the time he issued it, would be impossible to execute, "or the difficulty or risk of the execution of it would be "so great as to amount to a moral impossibility. In a "case of this kind, Major-General Wellesley is by no "means disposed to check officers detached in the exer-"cise of their discretion." †

It is remarkable that Nelson on one occasion justified

* See a letter to General Stuart, Dispatches, iii., 529; and one to Lord Lake, ii., 279.

† Supplementary Dispatches, iv., 287.

his own departure from his orders on exactly the same ground, arguing that those who had issued them "could "not know exactly at a distance" how far they were practicable, and that he, therefore, was justified in interpreting them liberally by a reference to their primary object, the defeat of the enemy. So, too, he on many occasions showed an anxiety to save officers whose folly had rendered them liable to a court-martial, though never overlooking any conduct which proceeded from a spirit of insubordination, or a "contempt of their supe-"riors."* Indeed it is very remarkable, not only how greatly the sentiments of these illustrious men coincided on matters of duty, but also what a striking resemblance there was in many circumstances of their respective careers. Both in an eminent degree acquired the esteem of the inhabitants of the countries in which they were serving: Nelson, when quitting the Leeward Islands, and afterwards in the Mediterranean, receiving almost as warm acknowledgments for his services and general worth, from our merchants and our foreign allies, as we have lately mentioned as having been offered to Wellesley in India; Nelson, too, being at one time slighted at the Admiralty as much as Wellesley was at the Horse-Guards, so that he, too, entertained serious thoughts of quitting the service. Happily for their country, both abandoned the hasty project: and no Englishman needs to be reminded how great was the similarity of their subsequent careers, even one of their fields of renown being the very same; how one destroyed the fleets as completely as the other overthrew the armies of France; and how, though differing in the manner of their deaths, they received equal funeral honours from their grateful country, and now lie side by side the most honoured

* See Southey's 'Life of Nelson,' (one vol. ed.) pp. 49, 56, 106, 215, 295.

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memorials in her national cathedral, which they, above all the other heroes who lie entombed beneath its lofty dome, make holier by their ashes.*

On one occasion, in the brief interval which elapsed between the arrival of Wellesley in England and the departure of Nelson for the last and greatest of his triumphs, these heroes met in the office of the Secretary at War; but the interview between them was of the briefest duration, though sufficiently long to allow Nelson, when he had ascertained the name of his casual companion, to express views of sagacious foresight and comprehensive policy, which greatly strengthened in the mind of the more reserved soldier the admiration which his unrivalled exploits had kindled in every one. What impression the younger soldier made on his renowned contemporary, that hero was not spared to record; but had he lived to witness his achievements in the country, the shores of which twice beheld his own invincible prowess, he would, doubtless, have admitted that he had formerly undervalued the army, and that a soldier could go by as straight a path to serve his country as the choicest of his own comrades and pupils.†

* 'In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier.'—CHILDE HAROLD, c. iv.

† See Southey's 'Nelson,' p. 205.

CHAPTER VI.

Wellesley touches at St. Helena—Is sent to Holland—Enters Parliament—Defends Lord Wellesley's Indian policy—Becomes Secretary for Ireland—Commands a brigade at Hastings—Becomes Colonel of the 33rd—Goes as second in command to Denmark—Defeats the Danes at Kioge—Marries.

IN March, 1805, Wellesley set sail from Madras, and after a prosperous voyage landed in England in the middle of September. On his way he touched at St. Helena, the destined prison of his future greatest antagonist; and it is remarkable, as showing how little reason the illustrious prisoner really had to complain of his allotted place of confinement, that Wellesley wrote to his brother in India in terms of the warmest admiration, both of the beauty of the scenery and of the healthiness of the climate, from which he conceived that he himself, though unable to make more than a very brief stay in the island, had derived considerable benefit.

Even during his voyage he was not idle; but drew up some memorials of great value for the use of the Government, especially two, on the subject of agriculture in India, and of the best means of preventing the dearths which were of such frequent recurrence in that country; and on a project which had occurred to the Ministry at home, and on which they had consulted Lord Wellesley,

of sending regiments of negroes from the West Indies to India, and receiving in exchange in the West Indian islands a corresponding force of sepoys. In a most lucid examination of the plan in all its bearings, Wellesley showed its complete impracticability: passing a deserved panegyric on the exploits of our own soldiers in India, which he declared to have surpassed their achievements in any other part of the world, and which he attributed in a great measure to the pride they felt at being "a "distinct and superior class in India," which prompted them to make their actions correspond with their "high "notions of their own superiority," he pointed out that negroes could have no such feeling, could never be capable of such exploits, and would never be able to inspire the natives of India with that respect for, or fear of their military qualities which they felt for our soldiers, but not for the armies of even any other European power. He pointed out, too, how little suited the sepoys were for service in the West Indies, since they never made good light troops, nor, indeed, ever did good service of any sort except when supported by British regiments, while they were also very delicate in constitution, and quite unable to stand the same amount of fatigue or varieties of climate as our own soldiers.*

At first it seemed likely that Wellesley would have but a brief respite from his military labours, as his arrival found the Government preparing to send an expedition to the Continent, to second the efforts which Austria was making to check the growth of Napoleon's power; and he was appointed to a brigade in the army which sailed under the command of Lord Cathcart to Hanover with that object. But the event of the battle

* Supplementary Dispatches, iv., 515, 520.

of Austerlitz, which for a while deprived Austria of the means of resistance, caused the recall of the British force, and Wellesley returned home to busy himself for the present with occupations of a more peaceful character.

The discussion of the different arrangements preliminary to this expedition introduced him to the personal acquaintance of Pitt; and that great minister, whose prematurely approaching end was as yet unexpected by his most intimate friends, was greatly impressed by the high qualities which even a brief conversation revealed to such an acute judge of character; and when, a month or two afterwards, Lord Wellesley returned from the East, he told him that "he had never met with any "military officer with whom it was so satisfactory to "converse." And the points of his character which most especially struck Pitt were the foresight and clearness with which he at once perceived and stated difficulties before he undertook any service; and the resolution with which, as soon as he had undertaken it, he banished from his mind all recollection of them, except such as might be necessary to surmount them. The Minister was also struck by his entire freedom from all vanity or pretension, and on another occasion remarked, that though he had given him a clearer idea of Indian affairs than he had ever had before, he had spoken of them as if he had been a surgeon of a regiment, not as one who had played an important part in them himself, so that Pitt "was at a loss which most to admire, his modesty "or his talents."*

At the beginning of the next year, Wellesley obtained a seat in Parliament as member for Rye, and the session had scarcely commenced when he was called upon to

* 'Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope,' ii., 292.

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take a share in its debates on a subject in which he was deeply interested. Lord Wellesley's measures while he was in India had met with very strenuous opposition from a majority of the directors and proprietors of the East India Company; and a Mr. Paull, a person who had been a tailor, but who had now become a member of the House of Commons, brought forward a series of resolutions impeaching his administration in several important particulars of his dealings with the native princes.

Immediately on Wellesley's return from India, he had occupied himself with great zeal in explaining the principles of his brother's government of India to Pitt, who was well inclined to approve of and to defend them; and in vindicating them to Lord Castlereagh, then President of the Board of Control, who was disposed to take a less favourable view of some of the measures to which the Court of Directors had objected, and who—though on Sir Arthur's representations he prevented the Court from sending out a despatch condemnatory of all the measures adopted in India since the settlement of Mysore—had an evident leaning to their views of policy, and gave expression to such an inclination by authorizing the sending out of a despatch which, though it forbore to censure Lord Wellesley's proceedings, did in fact imply a reproof of some of them by the injunctions which it contained that they should not be looked upon * as a precedent for the guidance of future Governors-General. Sir Arthur had now to defend the brother whom he admired against meaner antagonists, and it was in his defence that he made his first speech in the British Parliament. To any very elaborate eloquence or oratorical skill he never at any time of his life made

* Supplemental Dispatches, iv., 533.

any pretension; but on the present occasion he was personally acquainted with the whole of the circumstances on which Mr. Paull's charges were founded, and in the debates which ensued, his clear and intelligible statement of the facts greatly contributed to the rejection of the motion, which had no better fate when, two years afterwards, the subject was renewed by Lord Folkestone. In another debate on the financial state of the Company, the way in which some of the speakers had dwelt upon the large increase of its debt which had taken place during Lord Wellesley's administration induced Sir Arthur to make a speech of a length very unusual for him, in which he went over a great variety of complicated details with the greatest perspicuity; setting before the House the state of the Indian revenue at different periods, and clearly showing that the recent additions to the burdens of the Company bore no proportion to its rapid growth in wealth and power under his brother's government; while, as future means of reducing the burdens to a moderate amount were already provided, though the power and wealth thus acquired might naturally be expected to be increased rather than to be diminished, there was no ground whatever for alarm, or even for the slightest doubt as to the beneficial results of Lord Wellesley's policy.

At a subsequent period, Sir Arthur once expressed an opinion that his greatest talent was for finance; and though that judgment will hardly find many followers among the students of his campaigns, yet it must be allowed that even were there no other monument of his financial ability than this speech (which set before the House in most lucid arrangement every detail of the Indian revenue at different periods; the gradual rise

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of the Indian debt, the means which might be relied on for its steady diminution; the state of public credit in that country, the rapid improvement in it which had enabled Lord Wellesley in only seven years to reduce the interest paid by the Company from 12 per cent. to one-half that amount, and the judicious steps by which that improvement had been brought about)—were this speech, I say, our only materials for forming an estimate, we should still be justified by it in rating very highly his capacity in that department of government to which it chiefly refers.

Pitt had died in January, 1806. Fox had followed him to the grave in the September of the same year; and in April, 1807, the ministry of which he had been the chief ornament and support was dismissed by the King, and the Tory party resumed office with the Duke of Portland for their chief, as First Lord of the Treasury.

The new Government recognized the political ability which Wellesley had displayed in the debates of the previous session, by appointing him Chief Secretary for Ireland; and for a time he was fully occupied with the duties of his new post. It was not then, any more than it has been since, a bed of roses. The new Secretary was almost immediately compelled to introduce a bill for the suppression of insurrection in Ireland, and an Arms Act, obliging all owners of fire-arms in that country to register them, and enabling the magistrates, on their own discretion and responsibility, to search for such as should not be registered.

In his judgment these bills were measures of absolute necessity, since he believed that the spirit of rebellion was as yet far from extinguished in Ireland, and that the bulk of the people were still eager to assert their

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independence and separation from England. This he conceived to be the sole object for which they sought increased power of any kind; and considering that which they already possessed as more than they could be allowed to retain with safety, he referred to the example of King William, who, he said, had kept them down by main force, and he looked on that system as the only one capable of maintaining the obedience of a people so easily led by bad advisers.* Had he been correct in these views, nothing but the geographical situation of Ireland with reference to ourselves and to France could have made it worth keeping at all, since millions of subjects, ever on the watch to shake off their allegiance, could certainly add strength to no country whatever. But in spite of all his opportunities for forming a judgment on the matter, he was probably in error as to the extent to which the revolutionary spirit which he dreaded pervaded the island, mistaking the clamour and violence of a few interested demagogues for the unanimity of the people in general; though it is worthy of remark that both the bill and his arguments were supported by Grattan, who stated, as a fact within his own knowledge, that there did exist a strong French party in Ireland. To whatever extent it existed, he certainly was in error in considering force the best means of combating it, and it is surely matter of wonder that he who in India had so constantly inculcated on every one the policy and justice of conciliating the natives by mild treatment, should have been led by considerations of any kind to think a different method either reasonable towards, or likely to be successful with his own countrymen. We shall afterwards find, that though it was still some time before the British Ministry, or the British

* Larpent's 'Diary,' i., 119.

Parliament acknowledged by their actions that the eternal principles of justice and wisdom were the same on both sides of St. George's Channel, the first steps in the right direction were taken by himself;* and that he would have gladly seen them make even a further advance than circumstances with which we are as yet unacquainted—probably the invincible scruples of some of his colleagues—permitted him to secure.

The insurrection acts were, however, but of a temporary character; and were not, in fact, originated by himself, having been but slightly altered from some prepared by his predecessor in office under the late ministry. But another measure which he introduced, namely, the establishment of a city police in Dublin, proceeded solely from his own talent for organization and his love of order, and has produced lasting benefits, not only to the city in which it was first established, but (by the example and model which in subsequent years it afforded to his colleague, Sir Robert Peel) to London, and almost every other town in the United Kingdom.

He continued to hold this office for two years, in spite of being more than once interrupted in the discharge of its duties by calls to active service in his profession. He had not, indeed, been wholly without employment in it since his return from India. On the death of Lord Cornwallis, in 1805, he had been appointed, to his great gratification, Colonel of his old regiment, the 33rd; and in the course of the same year he had been sent to Hastings to command a brigade of infantry which was still kept on the Sussex coast, though the battle of Trafalgar had for ever dispelled all fears of a French invasion. While thus employed, he laboured with his usual assiduity in bringing his brigade to perfection in

* See vol. ii.

everything that related to its discipline and to its quickness in the execution of military manœuvres, to the astonishment of some of his friends, who could not forbear expressing their surprise at seeing one who had been accustomed to lead armies to victory now devoting his whole attention to the training of a handful of men who had no enemy to contend with. His reply has been recorded by the compiler of his despatches as eminently characteristic, indicating, as it did, the principle which always actuated his conduct. "The fact is," said Sir Arthur, "I am *nimmuk wallah*, as we say in the East; "that is, I have eaten the King's salt, and therefore I "conceive it to be my duty to serve with unhesitating "zeal and cheerfulness when and wherever the King "or his government may think proper to employ me."

In the summer of 1807, however, he was called to take a share in more active operations. Napoleon and the Emperor Alexander of Russia had lately concluded peace at Tilsit, and the treaty which they had made, in addition to the conditions which were publicly announced, contained a number of private articles, which were revealed by a secret agent to our Government. The most important of them bound the two courts of France and Russia, in the event of Great Britain refusing to comply with their demands, to summon Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal to declare war against her. Of these three powers, the one whose hostility was in many respects most to be dreaded was Denmark, since she had a considerable fleet in condition for immediate action. There were also reasons to believe that she would not be disinclined to comply with the summons, but would be easily tempted by the hope of revenging herself for the defeat which she had received from Nelson in 1801. The crisis was most important, and the new ministers

of the British Crown encountered it with rare energy and wisdom. The very instant that they received certain information of the designs of their enemies they resolved to anticipate them. The treaty of Tilsit was only signed on the 7th of July. On the 3rd of August a powerful British fleet, having on board an army of 20,000 men under Lord Cathcart, with Wellesley as his second in command, arrived off the Danish coast, accompanied by Mr. Jackson, a gentleman of considerable diplomatic reputation, who (since the Danish Government, even if unwilling, would still be unable to refuse the demand of its imperious neighbours, France and Russia, to declare war against Great Britain) was charged to require that Denmark should surrender her fleet to us, to be held as a deposit till the end of the war, and then to be returned in the same state as when removed from the Danish harbours. It was plain, from the magnitude of the armament by which Mr. Jackson was accompanied, that, in the event of this requisition meeting with a refusal, we were prepared to compel submission to it by force. It was plain, too, that to such an armament Denmark had no means of offering a prolonged or efficient resistance. Still, the Prince Royal conceived that his honour called upon him to refuse compliance with such a demand so made. He did refuse, and, in obedience with his instructions, Mr. Jackson declared war against Denmark, and the commanders of the fleet and army at once prepared to give effect to the declaration.

On the 14th of August our troops began to disembark, landing on the island of Zealand, with the intention of attacking Copenhagen; but a calm, which suddenly came on, prevented the transports which carried the artillery from approaching the shore for several days, so that it was the 1st of September before the batteries were completed with which it was proposed to bombard

the city. As in the former attack upon Copenhagen, in 1801, the chief operations were entrusted to the second in command; and while the batteries were erecting, Wellesley had proceeded with 10,000 men to attack the main army of the Danes, which was assembling in the interior of the island in numbers slighty superior to his own force. On the 26th he began his march to Roeskild Kroe; and on arriving near Kioge, on the 28th, and finding the enemy in a strong position on the north side of the town, he determined at once to attack them. He detached General Linsengen with a division to cross a small stream on which one of their flanks rested, so as to turn their left and cut off their retreat, while he himself attacked them in front: but Linsengen was unable to execute his orders, having found the bridges at Little Salbye, where he was directed to cross the stream, broken down; and Wellesley was consequently obliged in some degree to alter his dispositions. His attack, however, succeeded completely, and the Danes were routed, losing many killed and wounded, nearly 1,200 prisoners, and 10 guns. The bombardment of the capital, which lasted three days, proved equally irresistible; and on the 5th of September the Danes were reduced to solicit terms of capitulation. Lord Cathcart, to mark his sense of the ability which Wellesley had displayed in the battle of Kioge, sent for him from the army, that he might have the honour of negotiating the treaty, which was signed on the 7th; and the fleet, artillery, and military stores belonging to Denmark were surrendered and removed to this country.

In his despatch announcing this important result, Lord Cathcart very honourably attributed to Wellesley the chief credit of the success: though only second in command, he had the unusual honour of being particularly named in the votes of thanks with which both

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Houses of Parliament rewarded those who had done this important service to their country: and Mr. Abbot, the Speaker of the Commons, in delivering to him the thanks of that House, made a graceful and eloquent allusion to that "genius and valour" which "had already "been the terror of our distant enemies;" and, from his past achievements, ventured to predict his attainment of future triumphs over nearer and more formidable foes, prophesying that the sword which had already proved so formidable would hereafter "not be drawn in vain to "defend the seat of empire itself and the throne of the "sovereign." Few predictions have been more fully verified, and the Speaker was himself singularly destined to testify to the truth of this prophecy, when, seven years later, he again delivered to the victorious General the thanks of his countrymen for his almost countless victories over the most formidable and inveterate foe whom British leader ever encountered.

Wellesley returned to England in October; resuming the duties of his political office, and tasting for a while the sweets of domestic life. In the preceding year he had married Lady Catherine Pakenham, daughter of the Earl of Longford, to whom he had become attached even before his departure for India. In the February of this year, his happiness had been increased by the birth of a son, the present Duke of Wellington, who has recently been most honourably engaged in the completion of the most enduring monument to his great father's wisdom and virtue, by the publication of further portions of his admirable despatches. And in February, 1808, a second son was born to him, subsequently known as Lord Charles Wellesley, who, having been long a sufferer from ill health, and afflicted with total blindness died in the winter of 1858, leaving behind him a name enshrined in the affectionate recollection of many friends

and an infant family, the eldest of whom appears destined to be the inheritor of the name and honours of Wellington.

Wellesley was no longer member for Rye: the Parliament to which he was returned by that borough had been dissolved in the autumn of the same year: and in the succeeding Parliament he sat as member for Midhurst. That Parliament was also dissolved in May, 1807; and in the next, having been elected member both for Tralee and for Newport in the Isle of Wight, he took the oaths as member for Newport, which he continued to represent as long as he remained a member of the House of Commons. In the debates in the early part of the session of 1808, he was often called up by the discussions on Irish affairs, especially by those respecting the College of Maynooth, the augmentation of which he resisted, although he approved of the principle upon which that institution was founded. And in one debate, which was excited by the act of the Government in making Dr. Duigenan, the Judge of the Prerogative Court in Ireland, a Privy Councillor, after he had spoken in very intemperate terms of the Roman Catholics in Ireland, Wellesley defended the appointment on the reasonable ground that his judicial office made his assistance at the Privy Council indispensable for the transaction of much of the ecclesiastical business which came before it; excusing Dr. Duigenan's indiscreet language by imputing it to his excessive zeal; but pointing out that "every example of such language ought to serve as "a warning to both sides of the House to avoid being "betrayed into it for the future." And at the same time he took occasion to make a declaration, which shows how early those opinions of religious toleration were formed on which he subsequently acted when he carried the great measure of Roman Catholic Emanci-

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pation. "My own opinion," he concluded, "undoubt-
"edly is, and always has been, that, without distinction
"of religion, every man ought to be eligible to be called
"upon to do service to the State in that department
"or branch of service for which he may happen to be
"peculiarly qualified."

The interest with which he regarded the affairs of India continued unabated; and thinking a renewal of war with the Mahrattas highly probable, he often lamented to his Indian correspondents the apathy respecting them existing in England, which he conceived to have been turned into disgust in some quarters by Monson's disaster and Lake's failure before Bhurtpore. But at the beginning of 1808 his attention was particularly called to the subject by the Cabinet, which had been led to suspect that among the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit was one having for its object a joint invasion of our Indian dominions by France and Russia. It was well known that such an expedition had been a project of the Emperor Paul; and as it is with some reason believed to have formed a part of the plans of his latest successor, the views which Wellesley submitted to his Government respecting it have a peculiar and a permanent interest.

Persons unaccustomed to military operations, who were inclined to take a sanguine view of our prospect of making a successful resistance to such an invasion, looked upon the Indus as a barrier almost impregnable; but Wellesley, though the most splendid example in military history of the forcing of the passage of a large river with an army (which he was himself destined speedily to furnish) had not yet been given, was of opinion that "the art of crossing rivers was now so well under-
"stood, that we could not hope to defend the Indus as a
"barrier." Nevertheless, he recommended that, in the

event of any attack, we should endeavour to make the upper part of that river the seat of operations, seizing Attock, a strong town on the eastern bank, in the neighbourhood of Peshâwur; but not collecting any large force in that district, nor endeavouring to do more than delay the progress of the invaders. The situation for the concentration of our main army he recommended should be the neighbourhood of Delhi, as affording a central position, from which it could move in any direction as soon as the line of the enemy's operations should be ascertained. For such a war, he pointed out that the aid of "large "bodies of the native light troops would be indis- "pensable: and also, that many of the details of our "own operations must depend on the disposition of "Scindiah and Holkar; though their friendship or "hostility would affect the position and employment of "our reserves drawn from the armies in the Deccan "rather than the movements of our main body. Some- "thing would likewise depend on the efficiency of the "forces of the Peishwah and of the Nizam." The Lower Indus he pronounced inaccessible to the enemy from the character of the country; and evidently entertained no apprehension of the result of the struggle. And if he was justified in his confidence then, it is plain that the events which have taken place since he wrote have greatly strengthened our position in those countries, and that the acquisition of the Punjab and of Scinde have furnished us with outworks which will prove of the most essential importance and usefulness if ever, or whenever, Russia shall attempt to carry her long-cherished project into execution, and to wrest from us the dominions from which we in time past expelled not only the French, but also the native princes, to the great happiness of the varied inhabitants of those vast and wealthy regions.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

CHAPTER VII.

Napoleon's invasion of Spain—The Spaniards apply to us for aid—Wellesley is sent to Spain in command of an army—Reaches Corunna—Proceeds to Oporto—Lands his army in Mondego Bay.

THE treaty concluded between Napoleon and Alexander at Tilsit, which had already given Wellesley employment in the north, was now about to summon him to a more extensive and independent field of action. He had hitherto, even while reaping his glorious harvest of triumph and renown in India, been in some degree under the command of others; but for the future, with the exception of the brief interruption to his authority at and after the battle of Vimiero, which all who had caused it had sufficient reason to repent, he enjoyed the supreme military command, devising all his measures by his own genius, executing them on his own responsibility, and though sometimes hampered and embarrassed by the fears or narrow views of his political superiors, gaining for himself all the glory of success, as he would certainly have been left to bear all the discredit of failure.

Napoleon had long resolved to make himself master of the whole Spanish Peninsula, when the treaty of

Tilsit, as it were, ripened his projects, by securing to them the consent of Alexander, who was easily won over by the promise of similar connivance on the part of Napoleon at the Russian views of aggrandizement on the side of Turkey. Accordingly, before the end of the year, a French army, under Junot, had made itself master of Portugal, compelling the royal family to flee for safety to its Brazilian territories on the other side of the Atlantic; and in the first months of 1808, another army, under Murat, Napoleon's brother-in-law, took possession of Madrid, while the French ambassador artfully fomented quarrels between King Charles IV. and his son and heir-apparent, Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias, till he induced them both to enter France, in order to submit their differences to the arbitration of Napoleon. Napoleon, as soon as he thus got them in his power, broke all the engagements into which his ambassador had been authorized by him to enter, detained both princes prisoners, and compelled them to make a formal renunciation of the Spanish crown, which he designed to place on the brows of one of his own brothers, and which, after it had been refused by Louis, King of Holland, he finally allotted to Joseph, who unwillingly resigned the throne of Naples to accept it.

On the 20th of July, 1808, Joseph arrived in Madrid, having already received the sworn allegiance of most of the principal nobles and executive bodies in the kingdom; already, also, events had given ample proof that it was no untroubled sovereignty that he had thus consented to exercise. Murat, though the bravest of soldiers, was a most unskilful politician. At the beginning of May, by his arrogant and violent conduct, he had irritated the populace of the capital into acts of disorder and lawlessness; and then he had attempted to

repress the tumults which he himself had caused by inhuman and indiscriminate massacre. He only fanned the flame which a more judicious governor might probably have extinguished with ease. The tumult became insurrection, and the insurrection spread with inconceivable rapidity over the whole kingdom. In some cities and districts it was sullied by acts of dis graceful atrocity; in others it was guided by leaders of patriotism and honour; but neither the frantic enthusiasts who disgraced the cause of their country in some quarters, nor their braver countrymen who upheld it more creditably in others, could entertain a hope that their unassisted efforts would be able to withstand the wrath of Napoleon, or the armed hosts which all foresaw that he would pour into the Peninsula to carry out his projects, and gratify at once his ambition and his revenge.

Against this great and immediate danger, England was the only country to which the Spaniards could have recourse for assistance. Even before the insurrection broke out at Madrid, Castaños, one of the Spanish generals, had been negotiating with Sir Hew Dalrymple, the Governor of Gibraltar, to obtain aid; and that officer had supplied him with arms, ammunition, and money; while Admiral Purvis, who commanded the British squadron off Cadiz, and General Spencer, who, with 5,000 men, was in the neighbourhood, offered to co-operate with the patriots in that city. This latter offer was not accepted; but the conduct of the English generals appeared a favourable omen of the feelings entertained by the nation in general towards Spain, as well as towards Portugal: and to England, therefore, envoys were sent by the different provinces, and by the

Supreme Junta, as the body was called which was recognized by the national party as the legitimate governors of the country during the captivity of its lawful sovereigns. Deputies were sent at the same time by the Portuguese with a similar object. They arrived in London in June, where their narration of the recent events was received with great exultation, their request for aid with unanimous sympathy. Up to this moment, war, though not carried on with any great activity on either side, had existed in name between the two nations of Great Britain and Spain; but the resolution of the Spaniards to resist the grasping ambition of the French emperor effaced all recollection of their having fought against us under his banner at Trafalgar; and the Opposition vied with the Ministry in praises of their patriotism, and in eagerness to support them in making the stand on which they had determined for their own preservation, and, as Sheridan truly said, for the salvation of Europe, and the liberation of mankind.

It was plain that any assistance, to be efficacious, must be instant; and very fortunately the means of giving immediate assistance were ready. In the preceding year, a considerable force had been collected at Cork by the former Ministry for an expedition to South America; the existing Government, on succeeding to office, had relinquished so absurd a scheme of distant conquest, but had kept the troops together at that port; so that now, at this most important crisis, there was a disposable army, not only ready for service, but actually at the most suitable place for embarkation, wanting nothing but a general. The general was soon provided. With a judgment to which, unhappily, they did not long adhere, the ministers offered the command

to Wellesley, who at once accepted it; and having with great rapidity made arrangements for the temporary discharge of his political duties as Secretary for Ireland, which he was not yet permitted to resign, he repaired to Cork, from whence he sailed on the 12th of July, and proceeding in advance of his army in a fast-sailing frigate, for the purpose of obtaining more precise information than could be collected in England, landed at Corunna amid the congratulations of the people on the 20th; the very same day on which Joseph Napoleon entered Madrid amid the sullen silence of the citizens, from whom neither the example nor the threats of his guards could extort a word or a look of cheerfulness and welcome.

Besides the troops which sailed from Cork, and which amounted to nearly 10,000 men, Wellesley was promised additional reinforcements as soon as they could be got ready; and was further ordered, on his landing in the Peninsula, to take General Spencer's division under his command; and as intelligence which reached the ministers shortly after he had sailed led them to think the French force in the neighbourhood of Lisbon more considerable than they had previously supposed, they sent off from Harwich a further reinforcement of 5,000 men, and prepared to expedite with all their power the departure of a division of 10,000 more, under Sir John Moore, which had just arrived from the Baltic, where their aid had been declined by the King of Sweden. It was probably the extent of these reinforcements, which would carry up the total amount of the army to be employed to 30,000 men, that prompted the Government to think it expedient to give the chief command to an older officer, since Wellesley's commission as lieutenant-general was not yet of three months' standing. Accordingly, the same mail which brought the tidings

of this augmentation of his army, announced to him also that he was no longer to be its chief, but that that honour had been assigned to Sir Hew Dalrymple, with Sir Harry Burrard as second in command; and at the same time four other lieutenant-generals* were ordered to join the army, every one of whom was senior to himself, although, till they, or one of them, should arrive, Wellesley was to carry out the instructions which he had originally received with all possible expedition, without in any respect waiting for the arrival of his superior officers. There is probably no single incident in the life of the illustrious subject of this memoir which exhibits in a more admirable degree his undeviating adherence to his rule of allowing no personal considerations to interfere with the principles of obedience to his superiors, and with a regard to the public interests of the State. We have seen how deeply he was mortified when his brother thought it necessary to entrust the command of the Egyptian expedition to Sir David Baird, after he had been in the first instance appointed to it; and every circumstance which then caused him such annoyance certainly existed in a greater degree on this occasion; for now, though junior to them, he was of exactly the same rank as the officers by whom he was thus superseded, and he might also have thought, without any undue arrogance, that the great services which he had performed, and the high reputation which he had earned, entitled him to more consideration than he could claim, even from a brother, at what may be termed by comparison the outset of his career. Nor was he aware that Lord Castlereagh, the minister of the War Department, had, in announcing to Sir Hew Dalrymple his appointment

* Sir John Moore, General Hope, General Fraser, and Lord Paget.

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as Commander-in-Chief, recommended Wellesley "to his "particular confidence," on account of "his high reputa- "tion, his great prudence, temper, and military experi- "ence;" and had pointed him out "as an officer of "whom it was desirable for Sir Hew on all accounts "to make the most prominent use which the rules "of the service would permit." * Even had he been aware of this letter, he might perhaps have thought that in one view it did not improve the matter, but rather made it appear that there must be some very strong reason for superseding an officer possessed of such high qualifications; he might also have expected that such a letter would not improve his position with his superior officer, but would have a tendency (as he subsequently thought that it had had) to make Sir Hew rather jealous of one who was so highly praised by the minister at home. Whatever his opinion would have been, he had no knowledge of the letter at the time, and had received nothing but the naked announcement that he was no longer to be Commander-in-Chief; yet so perfect was now his control of himself, so complete his forgetfulness of his own interest when brought into competition with the requirements of the public service, that not only was he betrayed into no hasty act, nor even into a single impatient word by his disappointment, but his reply to the minister's communication does not even show that any effort had been necessary to abstain from such. He assured Lord Castlereagh "that he did not doubt his kindness towards him; "that whether he was to command the army or not, or "was to quit it, he should do his best to insure its "success; and should not hurry the operations, or "commence them one moment sooner than they ought

* Dispatches, iv., 18.

"to be commenced, in order that he might acquire the "credit of the success." And though he probably expected to be recalled altogether when the whole of the numerous staff now appointed should arrive, he proceeded to assure Lord Castlereagh of his willingness to serve the Government in whatever way they might determine to employ him, whether in Spain or elsewhere.

As he spoke he acted. The Spanish deputies who had been sent to England had limited their petitions for aid in their own country to a request of supplies of money and ammunition, not as yet wishing for the co-operation of British troops in a struggle to which they fondly believed their own soldiers were equal; being also in some degree influenced by a jealousy of British officers, to whom they were not inclined to see any of their own subordinate. And they urged, that whatever military force we could send to the Peninsula should rather be employed in Portugal, since to drive the French from that kingdom, and to incite a general insurrection against them there, was a necessary preliminary to their effectual expulsion from Spain. In accordance with these views, which, as far as the expulsion of the enemy from Portugal was concerned, were evidently well founded, Wellesley's instructions directed him, as soon as he had procured sufficient information respecting the state of affairs in both kingdoms, to act on his own discretion in deciding whether at once to commence operations, or, if he should doubt the adequacy of the force which he had with him, to wait for further reinforcements.

He was not long in deciding on the course to be adopted. His first despatch to the Home Government is dated only the day after his arrival at Corunna; but he had already learnt that in Spain affairs presented a very chequered complexion. The insurrection was

general, except in Biscay, Navarre, and the immediate neighbourhood of Madrid, where the presence of the French army kept the inhabitants in awe. In Aragon and Catalonia, some French detachments had been defeated, and almost destroyed; and there were reports of Dupont having been taken prisoner in the south, which were without foundation, though they had in them something of a prophetic character, since the very next day that general did capitulate with his whole army at Baylen. On the other hand, in the previous week, Bessières had utterly routed a Spanish army of 25,000 men at Medina del Rio Seco, a place a little to the south-west of Valladolid, in Old Castile, and had thus become master of the whole course of the Douro, and of the line of communication between Galicia and the southern and eastern provinces. The French had also taken Santander, on the northern coast; but the Spaniards had sent a force to recover it, and entertained no doubt of succeeding: and a single day's investigation sufficed to convince Wellesley that the condition of the Peninsula was little altered during the last two centuries; at the beginning of which, Henry IV. of France pronounced, that if you made war there with a small army, you were beaten; if with a large one, you were starved. In the same spirit Wellesley now wrote to Lord Castlereagh, that if the reports of the disasters with which the French were said to have met were true, it was obvious that Napoleon (or, as he invariably calls him, Buonaparte *) could not carry on any operations there but by means of large armies; and he expressed his doubts whether the country would afford subsistence for a large army, and

* The difference is not merely nominal and unimportant. Napoleon was his imperial name. By calling him Buonaparte, our Government intimated that they did not recognize in him any rank beyond the military one.

whether, on account of the badness of the roads and the difficulty of the communications, supplies could be brought in sufficient quantities from France by land, while if any endeavour were made to convey them by sea, such an attempt might easily be hindered by a British squadron cruising off the northern coast.

In Portugal, he reported that Junot had 13,000 or 14,000 men at Lisbon, and 3,000 more at Almeida and one or two other places; but that all the provinces of that kingdom north of the Tagus were in a state of insurrection, and that the French could not show themselves outside the walls of the capital, while a Spanish army which was stationed at Almaraz impeded their communications with their countrymen at Madrid. There was also a Portuguese army at Oporto, which a small Spanish division was preparing to join. The different reports, however, which were brought to him were so little trustworthy that he pronounced it impossible to learn the truth; and this uncertainty made it difficult for him to decide at what point to disembark his army. The Junta of Galicia, with which he had several interviews while at Corunna, urged him to select Vigo or Oporto; but Sir Charles Cotton, the British admiral on that station, recommended Figueira, at the mouth of the Mondego, or Peniche, a town about forty miles more to the southward, and about sixty miles from Lisbon, and as Wellesley's instructions positively directed him to attack the French troops in the Tagus, in that respect apparently the more desirable landing-place of the two, had it not been commanded by a fort in possession of the French, armed with heavy batteries, and occupied by a garrison of 1,000 men.

Leaving Corunna, Wellesley proceeded to Oporto, where he conferred with the Bishop, who was at the

head of the Junta in that city, and with the principal Portuguese generals, from whom he learnt that the entire Portuguese army did not exceed 9,000 men, and that these were so insufficiently armed and disciplined, that but little use could be made of, and but little reliance could be placed on them; but the Bishop promised him horses for some of his dismounted dragoons, and mules for the conveyance of his stores, undertaking also to make satisfactory arrangements for providing him with those supplies for which he must necessarily depend upon the country in which he was.

From Oporto he sailed down the coast to the Tagus, for the advantage of a personal consultation with Admiral Cotton. While there, he received a letter from General Spencer, who, at the request of the Junta of Seville, had landed in Andalusia, and who considered his aid necessary to enable the Spaniards to defeat Dupont. Before he received Spencer's letter, Dupont, as has been already mentioned, had surrendered; while, on the other hand, Junot was making most energetic efforts to quell all resistance in the southern provinces of Portugal; and on the 20th of July, the same day that Wellesley arrived in the Tagus, his lieutenant, Loison, had given a large body of Portuguese insurgents, aided by a Spanish force of nearly 3,000 men, a decisive overthrow at Evora. With this defeat, indeed, Wellesley of course could not yet be acquainted; but he had heard enough of Loison's successes to feel sure that the Portuguese could offer no effectual resistance to the French: and after a full consideration of all the plans that had been proposed, and of all the obstacles which might probably be interposed to the execution of each, he decided on landing his army at the mouth of the Mondego, and sent orders to Spencer to embark his division, and to join him with all possible speed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Wellesley marches towards Lisbon—Separates the French Generals Loison and Laborde—Defeats Laborde at Roriça—And at Vimiero—He is superseded by Sir Harry Burrard; and then by Sir Hew Dalrymple—The Convention of Cintra.

To Figueira he himself repaired, and there received news of Dupont's surrender, and likewise of his own supersession. As has been already stated, this circumstance, mortifying as it must have been, as well as unexpected, produced no alteration in his plans, nor any relaxation of his activity. And as, in order to encourage the Portuguese, it was desirable to show every willingness to encounter the French, he decided on landing immediately; and on the 1st of August was commenced the first disembarkation of the British army in the Peninsula. Though the weather was fine, the surf was so heavy that the last troops did not reach the shore till the evening of the 5th; and the next day they were joined by the division of Spencer, who, with great judgment, the moment that he heard of Dupont's surrender, sailed to meet Wellesley, without waiting for his orders, which as yet had not had time to reach him. The landing of his men was not completed till the 8th; and then Wellesley, being at the head of above 12,000 men, of which,

however, not above 200 were cavalry, in conjunction with the Admiral, who at all times co-operated with him with the greatest cordiality, issued a proclamation to the Portuguese people, assuring them of the disinterested aid which the British army was prepared to afford them, and calling on them to combine with it for the rescue of their countrymen, and the restoration of their lawful prince. He also left a letter for Sir Harry Burrard, to communicate to him the information which he had collected, and the steps which he was on the point of taking, and then set out on his march towards Lisbon.

He had already recommended the British Government to raise and take into their pay an army of 30,000 Portuguese, and while his own troops were landing, he supplied arms himself to those Portuguese regiments which were within his reach, and suggested to their officers the measures necessary for their organization on a larger scale, and for the improvement of their discipline. The whole of the Portuguese regiments then in existence, as has been said before, did not amount to above 6,000 men, under General Freire, with about half as many more scattered over the northern provinces; and Freire's apprehensions and consequent vacillation made them almost useless.

Wellesley had scarcely begun to move, when he was met by difficulties which threatened to be more serious, because more permanent. Owing to defective arrangements, proceeding partly from want of experience, our commissariat department was in a very bad condition; while so far were the Portuguese from fulfilling the promises which the Bishop of Oporto had made, of supplying the army with fresh meat and forage, that after the march had been commenced, Freire actually required

Wellesley to supply the Portuguese division with bread: and when the British General declined compliance with such an unreasonable demand, refused to co-operate with him further, or to continue the line of march which he recommended, alleging the want of supplies which would be encountered on that road. Wellesley was quite aware that he could not procure his own supply of bread from the country itself (for Portugal is not a corn-producing district, but one which at all times relies for nearly half the year on foreign importation, and even then the common food of the peasants is Indian corn), so that to expect him to drain his own magazines of bread for the native troops was out of the question. The Portuguese soldiers were as yet in too inefficient a state for him to expect much advantage from them in the day of battle; but so desirable was it, for the sake of appearances, to have them acting in conjunction with his own, that though he would not grant Freire's request for bread (which he believed, indeed, to be a mere pretext, suspecting as he did that the real motive which made the Portuguese wish to separate from our army was a belief in the superiority of the French), he nevertheless conciliated him to the utmost in other ways, and at last persuaded him to leave 1,400 infantry and 250 cavalry under his orders. He had also great difficulty in procuring means of moving his guns, and was forced to leave some behind him for want of horses. However, as no evil could be so great as delay, the moment that the last boat-load of men reached the shore, he put his army in motion, the advanced guard starting on the 9th of August, and the main body following the next day.

"His line of advance was parallel to the coast, at as little distance from it as possible, in order to preserve his

communication with a fleet of store-ships which was moving slowly in the same direction; though he had guarded against the accident of being compelled to adopt a more inland road by making the army also carry with it a sufficient portion of the most indispensable supplies. They bore the burden willingly, being cheered by the prospect of an early encounter with the enemy, with whom they were eager to measure themselves in the sure confidence of victory; and they had not long to wait. Before Wellesley quitted the banks of the Mondego, Junot had taken steps to check his progress. He remained in Lisbon himself, thinking his presence necessary to awe the citizens into tranquillity; but on the 6th, he sent forward Laborde with 3,000 infantry, nearly 600 cavalry, and a few guns; a force which was strengthened a day or two afterwards by an additional brigade, and by the garrison of Peniche; and he despatched orders to Loison, who, with nearly 8,000 men, was still in the neighbourhood of Evora, to cross the Tagus at Abrantes, and having joined Laborde at Leyria, to give battle to the British with their united forces, which would be equal, if not superior in numbers to their approaching foes. But this plan was disconcerted by the line which Wellesley had chosen, which cut off the communication between the two French divisions, compelled Loison to retrace his steps towards the south to re-establish it, and placed Laborde in a position of unexpected difficulty, since no escape was open to him, but he was exposed alone to the attack of the advancing British army, which more than doubled his numbers.

Laborde was an officer of eminent courage and resolution, and of great readiness of resource and military skill. The reinforcements which he had received since he left

Lisbon had raised his force to nearly 6,000 men, and after examining one or two positions which were too extensive for his numbers, he fell back on the 14th to Roriça, where he awaited Wellesley's attack. Wellesley pressed on rapidly, and on the 15th arrived in sight of the French advanced posts at Obidos, from which village he took instant steps to drive them. The imprudence of the officer to whom the attack was entrusted, and the excessive eagerness of the men, caused the operation to be accompanied by unnecessary loss; but they obtained possession of the village, and from the high courage which they had displayed, their general derived confident hopes of future success.

As, however, it was of the greatest importance that the advantage to be obtained in the first encounter with the enemy should be decisive, he devoted the next day to a careful examination of the French position, which he soon found had been chosen with such skill as very much to neutralize his own superiority in numbers. Roriça is situated on a steep ridge almost at the end of a narrow valley, and at its north-western corner Laborde had posted his troops, having also occupied all the most favourable points on the hills on each side, while a mile further back, behind the village of Columbeira, the valley becomes narrower still, and there arises a second line of heights, supplying another equally defensible position in case he should be driven from this. Having ascertained the character of the ground, Wellesley resolved to attack the enemy the next morning, and to turn their position on both flanks by detachments, while he himself assailed it in front with the main body of his army. His plans succeeded perfectly according to his wishes, and the French were soon forced to abandon the first line of heights, and were in danger of being entirely

surrounded; but Laborde's great superiority in cavalry enabled him to avoid this disaster, and as he resolved to hold his ground till the last moment, in the hope of being joined by Loison, he fell back to the second ridge, and there renewed the combat. The attack of this second position was conducted in the same manner as that which had already proved successful against the first; but the resistance made by the enemy was now far more stubborn; nor was it till they had inflicted on their assailants a loss of nearly 500 men in killed and wounded that they finally retired from the field. Wellesley's want of horse prevented him from harassing their retreating columns, but they left behind them three guns, and the number of their killed and wounded considerably exceeded ours. So narrow had been the field of battle, that the greater part of our troops had been unable to take any part in the engagement, which had fallen almost wholly on five of our regiments,* whose numbers did not equal those of the defeated French.

Laborde directed his retreat towards Lisbon, and on his arrival at Torres Vedras, on the evening of his defeat, he was joined by Loison. The news of their juncture reached Wellesley the same night, and he prepared to march against them the next morning, while his troops were flushed with their recent success, not doubting that he should be able to give a good account of the whole of the hostile army, though he feared that his deficiency in cavalry would prevent him from making the victory on which he reckoned as complete as he could wish: but on the morning of the 18th, he heard that General Anstruther had arrived at the

* "5th, 9th, 29th, the riflemen of the 60th and 95th, and the flank companies of Major-General Hill's brigade."—Wellington Dispatches, iv., 84.

mouth of the Maceira with 2,500 men, and he consequently changed his plan, and moved towards the coast to cover their disembarkation, taking up a position at Vimiero, and sending a detachment down to the bay, in which the newly-arrived division landed on the 19th. The next day, General Acland arrived with a further reinforcement of 1,500 men, which also landed immediately; and Wellesley, being now at the head of 16,000 British troops, resolved to press on with all speed towards the capital, and to compel the French to a decisive battle.

He was aware that Junot's numbers were on the whole superior to his own; but as the French general would be forced to leave some regiments behind, to overawe the citizens of Lisbon, and to provide for the security of one or two other places, he reckoned that there would not be left to him above 14,000 men available for a general action; though it was true that of these nearly 1,500 were cavalry, while his own horse amounted to little more than one-fourth of that number. The superiority of the enemy in this arm was inconvenient in another respect, as rendering it impossible for him to reconnoitre their position; but his knowledge of the country, from maps on which he could rely, was so accurate that he made no doubt of being able to choose his own ground for the anticipated battle.

Junot was equally willing to bring matters to a decisive issue. He had quitted Lisbon on hearing of Laborde's defeat at Roriça, and on the evening of the 18th he reached Torres Vedras, where, in the course of the next two days, he concentrated and reorganized his forces, and made arrangements for a battle.

On the evening of the 20th, Acland having completed the disembarkation of his corps, Wellesley had begun to

issue his orders for marching at daybreak, when Sir Harry Burrard arrived in the bay. Wellesley immediately repaired on board the ship which had brought him, and explained to him his intended plan of operations, proposing that Sir John Moore's division, which was at the mouth of the Mondego, should march upon Santarem, in order to cut off the retreat of the enemy towards Almeida, while he himself, with the forces then present, should push forward on the road to Mafra, so as to turn their position at Torres Vedras, and to bring them to action so near Lisbon that the possession of that city would be the inevitable fruit of victory. It subsequently appeared, from papers drawn by the French engineers which fell into our hands, that he was quite correct in supposing that the French, if defeated, would endeavour to retreat by Santarem; but Burrard doubted whether Moore's force would be sufficient to resist them, and resolved to unite it to the army at Vimiero. He therefore sent orders to that general to join him with all speed, and prohibited any forward movement till he should arrive.

In vain did Wellesley represent to him the probability of the French attacking us if we did not march against them, or else, what would probably be still more disadvantageous to us, availing themselves of the respite about to be given to them to fortify the strongest positions on the line of our advance to Lisbon; he could make no impression on Sir Harry's cautious and unenterprising disposition. He was forced to submit, and could only make arrangements to repel that attack on his own position on which he foresaw that our inactivity would encourage Junot to venture. Accordingly, at dawn on the 21st, he began to strengthen his right, which, from the movements of the French patrols on the

two preceding days, he expected to be the object of their first assault. The village of Vimiero stands in the valley of the river Maceira, and in front of it is a ridge, flattened at the summit into a narrow table-land, which at its right extremity is traversed by the road from Lourinham to Torres Vedras, and on which two brigades of our infantry were posted with six guns. Behind the right of the ridge, from which it was separated by a ravine, another hill swept in a gentle semicircle, extending on its further side almost to the sea; and this was occupied by five more brigades, with eight guns. The cavalry and the Portuguese division were stationed behind the village.

Wellesley was right in his judgment that he should be attacked, but mistaken as to the point which the enemy would select. News of their approach reached him at an early hour, and at about eight o'clock they came in sight, with strong columns of infantry preceded by a large body of cavalry. It was soon apparent that the British advanced guard and left wing were destined to receive their first onset, and Wellesley, altering his dispositions with great readiness, brought Ferguson's, Nightingale's, Acland's, and Bowes's brigades to the heights crossed by the road from Lourinham already mentioned, along which the French were advancing, while one brigade, under Major-General Hill, was left in its former position to form a reserve.

The ground along which the French advanced was so uneven, and in some places so full of trees, that it was difficult for Wellesley to ascertain their movements with precision; and, on the other hand, the inequalities of the ground occupied by us prevented Junot from obtaining a correct knowledge of our position, and from being aware of the ravine which separated the two ridges

which he saw before him, and by which the greater part of our left was protected. He had under his command, as Wellesley had estimated that he would have, about 12,500 infantry and 1,500 cavalry, with 21 guns. Wellesley, as has been stated before, had about 15,000 British infantry, 210 British cavalry, a small division of Portuguese, consisting of about 1,400 infantry and 260 cavalry, and only 14 guns; so that the two armies, taken altogether, were very equal in force, the numerical superiority of the allies being fully counterbalanced by the advantages which the French possessed in cavalry and artillery.

The attack of the French was made with their usual impetuous valour, and with great resolution. Our fire was close and deadly, but they pressed on, though a ceaseless storm of musketry met them in the face, while our batteries kept up a constant cannonade on their flanks till they came within reach of the British bayonets, and then, after a desperate struggle, they were driven back with the loss of seven guns and of many prisoners. In another part of the field, a column led by Laborde attacked Anstruther's division, and Loison attacked Fane, but both were repulsed, and a body of our cavalry, gallantly led by Colonel Taylor, charged them in their retreat, doing great execution among them, till it in its turn was charged by the French horse, overpowered by numbers, and almost destroyed. This, however, was the only advantage gained at any period of the day by the enemy. Their attack on our extreme left was received by Ferguson's brigade with great steadiness, and was repulsed with great slaughter. They lost six guns and a great number of prisoners; their general, Solignac, was severely wounded. The Portuguese, who were quite fresh, were seen marching

in a direction which would enable them to threaten their rear, and Ferguson began to advance with the hope of compelling the whole of the division opposed to him to surrender. Brennier made a last effort to retrieve the fortune of the day; and taking some of our regiments by surprise, for a moment recovered some of the captured guns; but our men quickly rallied, drove back his column, retook the guns, made Brennier himself prisoner, and the victory was won. Wellesley prepared to make it complete by pursuing the beaten army with speed and vigour. Above 2,000 French had fallen; every one of their regiments had been hotly engaged, and was now exhausted and disordered, while some of our brigades had not fired a shot, and others had suffered so slightly as to be quite available for further operations. He designed, therefore, with part of his army to press Junot in such a direction as to drive him back upon the Tagus, while Hill, with three brigades, some of which were now nearer to Torres Vedras than any of the French divisions, should hasten forward, seize upon that post, and pushing rapidly on, cut the French off from Lisbon, and recover that city from them.

This brilliant manœuvre, which, in the disorganized state to which the French had been reduced by their defeat, could hardly have failed of success, would have probably driven Junot entirely out of Portugal; who would, indeed, have been fortunate if he could have led the remainder of his troops and of his artillery across the frontier without further disaster. But Wellesley was no longer to direct the movements of his conquering army. Sir Harry Burrard had landed during the battle, of Wellesley's arrangements for and conduct of which he approved so entirely that he declined to interfere with

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them; but as soon as the conflict was decided, he assumed the command, ordered Ferguson to halt in his victorious advance against Solignac's division, and prohibited any further offensive movement of the army in general till it should be joined by the troops under Sir John Moore. In vain did Wellesley point out to him that we had a large body of men which had not been in action; that they were prepared to advance, having provisions ready cooked in their havresacks (in compliance with an order which he himself had given the day before, with a view to this very contingency); having also plenty of ammunition; and, what was of more consequence still, being full of spirits at their recent success, while the French were in an equal degree disheartened. Burrard was satisfied with the advantage gained. He replied to Wellesley's arguments, "that he thought a "great deal had been done very much to the credit "of the troops, but that he did not consider it advisable "to move off the ground in pursuit of the enemy." To wait for a reinforcement which could not be expected to arrive in less than a week was to sacrifice the greater part of the advantages of victory; but Wellesley was forced to submit, and, deeply mortified, returned to his tent, telling his staff in his vexation that he and they had no further business than "to go and shoot red-"legged partridges." He felt as Nelson did on a somewhat similar occasion. That greatest of sailors was the principal agent in Hotham's victory over the French in 1795. As soon as he had secured the captured vessels, Southey* tells us that "he went to the admiral, and "proposed that the two prizes should be left with the "'Illustrious' and 'Courageux,' which had been crippled "in the action, and with four frigates, and that the rest

* Southey's 'Life of Nelson,' 127.

" of the fleet should pursue the enemy, and follow up " the advantage to the utmost. But Hotham's reply " was, 'We must be contented; we have done very " 'well.' 'Now,' said Nelson, 'had we taken ten sail, " 'and allowed the eleventh to escape, when it had been " 'possible to have got at her, I could never have called " 'it well done.' "

Hotham and Burrard were men of the same stamp, as were Nelson and Wellesley. The elder officers were men of unquestioned courage, and well acquainted with their profession; but they were content with small successes, nervously afraid of reverses, devoted to the cold rules of strict prudence, and not rebuked by, because unable to comprehend, the audacious decisive genius of their subordinates. The others were the founders of a new school, as intimately acquainted with the rules and requirements of professional caution, and as alive to their advantages as their superiors, but gifted also with that genius which knew when to dispense with them; inspired with that generous ambition, with that lofty daring which thinks nothing done while aught remains to do; and ready to encounter, not only personal danger, which both equally disregarded, but even the risk of failure and consequent peril to their reputation, which none ever held more dear, for the sake of doing their utmost duty to their country.

Wellesley's chief comfort was derived from the feeling evinced towards him by the army, who openly expressed their joy that it was under his command they had gained their victory. He, on his part, was equally pleased with them, and wrote to the Duke of York, then Commander-in-Chief, " that he could not say too much in their " favour; that their gallantry and discipline had been " equally conspicuous; and that this was the only action

" in which he had ever been in which everything had " passed as it was directed; and in which no mistake " had been made by any officer." He had only wanted, he declared, " a few more cavalry to have annihilated the " French army."

With his own share of glory he had reason to be satisfied: he had won two battles, one of them of so decisive a character that, had he not been prevented from following it up, its result would have been the ignominious expulsion of the invading enemy from the territory of our allies. And these advantages had been gained, and he had given up his command, within three short weeks after his landing on the Portuguese shore.

Sir Harry Burrard's tenure of command was briefer still. On the evening of the battle, Sir Hew Dalrymple arrived in Maceira Bay; the next morning he landed and assumed the command. Wellesley's position was not improved by the change. Sir Harry Burrard, though afraid to adopt the bold advance towards Lisbon which he had recommended, still, by abstaining from all interference with his arrangements for the battle, had manifested a high opinion of, and a just confidence in his abilities; but Sir Hew, in the very first interview that Wellesley had with him, showed that he had not only no confidence in him, but that he was prejudiced against him. He even found fault with many of his past arrangements, which, as it appeared from his subsequent evidence before the Court of Inquiry, he conceived to have been dictated by an improvident rashness which had met with undeserved success. And that very success he undervalued, considering the losses of the enemy as nearly counterbalanced by the disaster of our own cavalry. In one respect only did he coincide with the proposals of Wellesley, deciding on an advance towards Lisbon, though the time

was past for reaping the advantages which would have ensued upon such a movement, had it been adopted in the hour of victory.

Orders were issued to march the next morning; but they had scarcely reached the different divisions, when a dust was seen in the distance, and a report quickly spread that the French were advancing to retrieve their defeat of the previous day. The helmets of their cavalry were soon visible, but they proved to belong to a single squadron escorting General Kellermann with a flag of truce to the English head-quarters. He alighted at Wellesley's tent, and found to his surprise that that officer was no longer in command. He was conducted to Sir Hew Dalrymple, who, after a short interview with him, sent for Burrard and Wellesley, and announced to them that General Kellermann had been sent by Junot to propose a suspension of arms, with a view to the conclusion of a convention by which the French should evacuate Portugal. Wellesley at once gave his opinion that such a convention was desirable, but that the armistice ought not to be allowed to exceed forty-eight hours. On this latter point Sir Hew overruled his opinion, and granted a suspension of hostilities for an unlimited period, reserving only the right of terminating it after giving forty-eight hours' notice. Owing to this imprudent concession, it was protracted till the end of the month by the discussion of the unreasonable conditions which the French wished to introduce into the convention. As Kellermann, who signed the armistice on behalf of the French, was not the commander-in-chief, it was considered proper that it should be signed on our part also by a subordinate officer, and consequently, by Sir Hew's desire, Wellesley affixed his signature to it. At a subsequent period he regretted having signed an in-

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strument many provisions of which he disapproved, but at the moment he looked on his doing so as a formal act in no degree making him responsible for its contents, but only showing his willingness to carry out the views of his commander.*

It is probable that the uneasy position in which he already found himself with Sir Hew may have had its influence in inducing him thus to act in opposition to the dictates of his mature judgment; for, as he acknowledged himself, the expression of Sir Hew's desire that he should sign the armistice was not in the shape of an order which it was not in his power to disobey; and however strict may be the requirements of military discipline, it certainly can hardly be maintained that an officer who voluntarily signs a paper does not, by so doing, imply an approbation of its contents, and render himself at least a sharer in the responsibility attaching to it.

The reasons for which he approved of allowing the French to evacuate Portugal were founded on the disregard that had hitherto been paid to his advice; because, as the road to Santarem had been left open to them, they had now the means of securing themselves in Almeida and Elvas: places of such strength that the whole of the autumn might have been occupied in their reduction; and all operations for the rest of the season against the French in Spain, to which he was looking forward, would have been rendered impracticable; but he thought, with justice, that the convention by which that evacuation should be permitted "ought to be "settled in the most honourable manner to the army "that had beaten them;" and that they should not be

* "I signed it, notwithstanding my objections to it, because I would not "in the face of the whole army set myself up in opposition to the commander "of the forces on the very day he joined his army."—Letter of Sir A. Wellesley to Earl Temple, Duke of Buckingham's 'Court and Cabinets of George III.' vol. iv. p. 263.

allowed to waste our time by raising quibbles about the baggage which they were to be allowed to remove (much of which was plunder of the most shameful kind, consisting of many of the most valuable curiosities carried off from the National Museum, and plate and jewels of which even the churches had been rifled); and by making demands for the safe departure of a Russian fleet lying in the Tagus, with which they had no legitimate concern whatever. The concession of this last demand Sir Charles Cotton prevented, by declaring that to deal with a fleet belonged to him, and not to the generals; and finally the ships in question were surrendered to us by their admirals as a deposit, to be returned uninjured hereafter; the officers and men being allowed at once to return to their own country.

For a moment Sir Charles's objection appeared to make it probable that the whole negotiation would be broken off on this point; but it was quickly resumed, and at last, on the 30th of August, a convention was definitively signed at Lisbon, by virtue of which the whole of the French troops in Portugal were to evacuate that country, and to be conveyed by our fleet to a French port, with their arms, and a certain quantity of ammunition, and such baggage as was their lawful property. Of many of the articles of this convention, Wellesley disapproved extremely. For the amendment of some, he offered suggestions to which no attention was paid; against others he made strong remonstrances, which were equally disregarded; and at last, though confessedly the man of all others in the army who had acquired the most accurate information of the state of affairs in and of the general interests of the whole Peninsula, he was so little consulted, that it was several weeks after the convention was signed before he became acquainted with the precise conditions on which it had been concluded.

CHAPTER IX.

The army presents Wellesley with a piece of plate—A military inquiry into the Convention of Cintra is instituted—Wellesley receives the thanks of Parliament for the Battles of Roriça and Vimiero—He resumes his post as Irish Secretary—Inquiry into the Duke of York's conduct.

HE began to find his situation very unpleasant. The generals who had served under his command at Vimiero (as the officers in India had formerly done) showed their sense of his extraordinary merits, and—short as their period of service under his command had been—the attachment with which he had inspired them, by presenting him with a magnificent piece of plate; and (though of this he was as yet ignorant) the Secretary of State had written to express the King's high approbation of his conduct at Roriça and Vimiero. But from Sir Hew Dalrymple he received treatment such as he had never before met with from any commander under whom he had served. Whether Lord Castlereagh's letter were the cause, or whether it were to be attributed to his popularity with the army, the natural reward of the glory it had won under his command, Sir Hew manifested an unceasing jealousy of him, even to the extent of adopting some measures apparently merely because they were contrary to others which he had

recommended; and, what was probably more grating to Wellesley's feelings, evidently distrusting the sincerity of his professions of a desire to further the views of his superior officer.

At the same time of Sir Hew's own plans, as far as he was aware of them, he entertained a most unfavourable opinion. He pronounced that, if he were in Sir Hew's place, he would be in Madrid in a month, with 20,000 men; but, as it was, he had no hope of the adoption of active operations, and foreseeing nothing but evil and discredit to the army, he became very anxious to disconnect himself from it. He therefore expressed to Lord Castlereagh, as Secretary of State for War, an earnest wish to be allowed to return home, and his conviction that his departure was desirable, not only for himself, but likewise for the army, and for Sir Hew Dalrymple.

That general was apparently equally desirous of his absence, and on the 9th of September proposed to him a mission to Madrid in a political capacity, to stimulate the Spanish Government to recommend a line of conduct to the Spanish generals, and to concert plans with them; and at the same time to enter into communication with the various local juntas. Wellesley, while he expressed his willingness to be employed in any manner which Sir Hew might think proper, and his conviction that the presence of an English officer at Madrid, with powers sufficient for the arrangement of the affairs indicated by Sir Hew, was in the highest degree desirable, pointed out at the same time that it was indispensable to the success of such a mission that the person employed should possess the full confidence of his employer; and left it to Sir Hew himself to judge whether he was inclined to confide in him to the extent

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that was necessary. His implied demand to be treated with such confidence appears to have put an end to the matter; at all events, he heard no more on the subject. But such had become his opinion of Sir Hew's disposition towards him, that he forwarded the correspondence that had passed on the subject to Lord Castlereagh, "because "he was convinced that Sir Hew would tell that "minister that he had declined the mission."

He easily obtained leave to return home; but before he quitted the country he was anxious to see some prospect of affairs being better managed for the future. He had sent Lord Castlereagh the most accurate information that he could collect of the state of affairs in Spain; of the numbers of the French army, which he believed to consist of about 40,000 men, in Biscay, under Marshal Bessières; and likewise of the strength of the Spanish armies, which he estimated at 50,000 men, one-half of which was with Castaños in the south: the other half was under Blake, in Galicia. The forces of peasants in arms, in spite of the advantages which they had gained over bodies of French troops in different parts of Spain, he did not include in his calculations, since "they could not be reckoned upon (at least at "present) as efficient armies, and probably could not "leave the provinces to which they belonged." He also expressed an opinion that the aid of a British force, which he understood was promised to Castaños, even though it should not exceed 15,000 men, would be of the greatest service to that general. The rest of the British force to be employed in the Peninsula, which, after leaving 5,000 in Portugal, he supposed would not exceed 20,000 men, if the account given of their country by the Asturian deputies were true, would be most serviceably employed in securing that province.

At the same time he foresaw that wherever we should collect an army, the French would make its destruction their first object, and that it was not improbable that Napoleon himself would come to Spain to conduct the operations against it, and that he would, especially if it should be near the French frontier, multiply his numbers so as to compel us to retreat. Yet a retreat by sea might be easily kept open to us; nor should he "have any diffi-"culty in forming a plan for the defence of the province "of Asturias, provided he were certain that it would be "executed;" though he declined, as mere waste of time, giving in plans "which would depend upon the execution "of another." To secure to such an army as he believed the Government were prepared to employ, the services of a competent leader was naturally an object which he deemed of the greatest importance, and his eyes turned to Sir John Moore, who, though he had never as yet enjoyed an independent command, had earned a deservedly high reputation as general of a division under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, in Egypt, and since that time as commander of a brigade in England, which he had brought to an unprecedented state of efficiency. But Moore had lately been involved in some unpleasant discussions with the ministers at home, which had created some ill feeling on both sides, and which was therefore obviously likely to prevent his appointment to a command which could not be carried on without a cordial and confidential intercourse between the general and the Government. Wellesley therefore, thinking that recent occurrences must have convinced the ministers that the Commander-in-Chief must be changed, and that no one was so fit for the post as Moore, was most anxious to remove this obstacle; and, before he sailed, wrote to Moore, urging upon him that a man of his

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talents "ought not to preclude himself at such a time "from rendering the services of which he is capable by "any idle point of form," declaring for himself that, though holding a high office under Government, "he "was no party man;" but avowing his belief that he had "sufficient influence with many of those who were "at the head of affairs at home" to enable him to remove any difficulties that might stand in the way of Moore's appointment to the command, if that officer would allow him to act as a mediator between himself and them. Apparently he succeeded with both parties; for early in the next month, Moore received the appointment which Wellesley was so disinterestedly anxious to obtain for him.

By the solicitude which he manifested on this point, it was clear that he considered himself out of the question; but he could hardly have been prepared for the indignation which the convention which had been entered into with Junot (and which, from the date of the despatch in which Sir Hew Dalrymple forwarded it, has been misnamed the convention of Cintra) had excited all over England, and which for a moment seemed to threaten with professional ruin all the generals concerned in it. The newspapers printed the convention with a deep black border round it, as if mourning some national calamity: the King, who had intended to raise Wellesley to the peerage by the title of Viscount Vimiero,* apparently identifying the armistice with the convention, abandoned his purpose, declaring that he knew of no excuse which a British officer could make for signing conditions disgraceful to himself and to the nation; and even his own brother William declared that "he would

* 'Court and Cabinets of George III.,' iv., 252.

"rather have thrust his right hand into the fire than "have put it to such an instrument." * The mob, too, whose idol he had been on the first news of the victories of Roriça and Vimiero, now singled him out as the especial mark for their abuse; and it seemed as if the very fact of his having previously been the principal object of every one's admiration was now to point him out as the principal culprit; while the ministers themselves seemed to indicate their participation in the general feeling by directing the conduct of all the generals concerned in the armistice or convention to be investigated by a military court of inquiry. Nothing could be more straightforward and dignified than Wellesley's conduct under this trying vexation. He reached London on the 6th of October, and on that day he addressed to the Secretary of State a letter denying the accuracy of a statement made by Sir Hew Dalrymple that he had "agreed upon and signed certain articles for "the suspension of hostilities;" affirming "that he did "not negotiate them, that they were negotiated and "settled by Sir Hew himself, in Sir Harry Burrard's "presence and his own, and that he signed the armistice "by Sir Hew's desire"; but that he could not consider "himself responsible in any degree for the terms in "which it was framed, or for any of its provisions." But with the exception of this official denial, he refused to make any statement, or to permit any to be made by others in his behalf, till the Court of Inquiry should meet. To his friends he complained strongly of being accused "of being the adviser of persons over whom he "had had no control, and who had refused to follow his "advice, and of being made responsible for the acts

* 'Court and Cabinets of George III.,' iv., 255.

"of others;" but he saw "no immediate remedy for "these difficulties of his situation but patience and "temper." His conduct was apparently dictated partly by a consideration of the public interests, to which he thought it fatal to "institute public inquiries into the "conduct of officers in circumstances in which they "had acted fairly upon their opinions, for which they "had fair military grounds;" and partly by a regard for Sir Harry Burrard, whom, as he subsequently avowed before the Court, he considered to have had such grounds for the decision which he had formed, when he decided on waiting for Sir John Moore before making any attempt to follow up the advantages gained at Vimiero, though it was the delay which was thus enforced that had rendered the convention necessary. But towards Sir Hew Dalrymple Wellesley's feelings were very different. He complained that that general "had left "the Government and the public completely in the "dark respecting the military expediency of allowing "the French to evacuate Portugal;" and declared that there was "nothing in common between Sir Hew and "himself, though he had concurred with Sir Hew in the "opinion that it was expedient to allow the French to eva-"cuate Portugal;" and though he was still "convinced "that if we had not allowed them to evacuate that king-"dom in August, we should have been glad to do so our-"selves in November or December, after we should have "lost many men in the operations which we must have "carried on against them in a most unhealthy country "(Alentejo), in the worst season of the year." *

In the middle of November, the Court of Inquiry,

* Letter to Duke of Buckingham. 'Courts and Cabinets of George III.,' iv., 262 and 267.

composed of seven generals and lieutenant-generals,* met and examined the three officers whose conduct was brought into question, and several others who had been on the spot, and who were supposed by the Court, or by any of the officers concerned, to be able to give information on the subject. Dalrymple, Burrard, and Wellesley each made a statement of their proceedings; and Wellesley also read to the Court a comment on the statements made by the other two. He complained that with respect to the military operations which he had conducted, he had been accused by some of temerity and imprudence; by others, of excess of caution; while, with respect to the negotiations, it was proposed to punish him for advising measures which were adopted in opposition to his advice. Against the charge of rashness he defended himself, even while waiving all reference to the result of his operations, by a comparison of the numbers of his army with those of the French as engaged at Vimiero, which proved that his original estimate of the enemy's force was correct; he answered Sir Hew Dalrymple's objection to the line of advance from the Mondego which he had adopted, as leaving many strong positions in the hands of the enemy, by the assertion that the character of Portugal is such that any line of march must afford strong positions to an enemy acting on the defensive; while his line of advance had had one peculiar advantage which he could have gained by no other movement, namely, that it neutralized the great superiority in cavalry which the French were known to

* Sir David Dundas, President, Lord Moira, General Craig, Lord Heathfield, Lord Pembroke, Sir George Nugent, and Lieutenant-General Nicholls. For all the details given above see the evidence taken before the Court of Inquiry.

possess; that the operations which he had recommended to Sir H. Burrard, both before and after the battle of Vimiero, were practicable, safe, and would have been successful, he still maintained; though he admitted that Burrard had fair military grounds for forming a contrary opinion.

With respect to the armistice and convention, he had not, he said, thought the former of much importance; on the details of it he had been but little consulted, and when consulted, not regarded; on those of the convention he was not consulted at all, though he did volunteer some suggestions, which were wholly unheeded. But on the general principle of the expediency of allowing the French to evacuate Portugal, he had coincided in opinion with Sir Hew Dalrymple, and he gave cogent reasons for his having so concurred with the commander of the forces, and for his still considering that concurrence justifiable. He pointed out that on the afternoon of the 22nd, when Kellermann arrived at the British head-quarters, Junot had had time to collect his forces again, and to recover them from the confusion into which they had been thrown by their defeat; and his retreat to Lisbon, and across the Tagus into Alentejo was easy: he could have proceeded to Elvas, and thrown one division into that strong fortress, and could have sent another northward to secure Almeida; while our difficulties about supplies were great and increasing, and would only have been augmented by the arrival of Moore's division; nor, even if we had directed our whole strength to those two objects, could we reasonably have expected to reduce both Elvas and Almeida before the end of the year. Our forces thus fully occupied would have had no time to co-operate with the Spanish armies, while the convention set them at liberty to

enter Spain at once. As for any probability of our being able to compel the French to lay down their arms, whatever might have been the result if, as he had proposed, Moore had been directed to advance to Santarem, and if our army had pursued the enemy vigorously after the battle of Vimiero, any such advantage was now wholly out of the question, after orders had been sent to Moore to proceed to the Maceira. In fact, the French had military possession of the whole country, of the harbours, and of the fortresses: they had also ample magazines; and if Junot had really resolved to burn Lisbon, as he at one moment threatened to do, we should have been wholly unable to prevent him. He himself had a right too, he argued, to compare the situation of the French in Portugal with the condition of their garrisons in Cairo and Alexandria a few years before, both of which were allowed to evacuate those cities without any imputation being cast on our generals who had permitted them to do so.

With respect to the details of the two agreements for the convention and the armistice, with the former it was plain that he was in no manner connected. He had recommended a very different arrangement, with which he believed that the country would have been satisfied; that which was concluded he had neither negotiated nor signed, nor had he even been acquainted with its separate articles till after he arrived in England. The latter he had indeed signed, but merely as a matter of form; in fact, it was notorious that he had objected to some of its provisions, and, had it not been for General Kellermann's suggestion, Sir Hew Dalrymple had intended to sign it himself, which was a clear proof that he alone had negotiated it. He observed, moreover, what was certainly a very important consideration,

that this armistice, about which so much had been said, "was a mere dead letter, no single article of it "having been ever carried into execution, excepting that "by which hostilities were suspended."

The Court of Inquiry sat for a fortnight, examining witnesses, and after nearly a month's deliberation, delivered their report; giving high praise to Wellesley's conduct as long as he commanded the army; declining to pronounce on the prudence of those movements before and after the battle of Vimiero to which Burrard refused his consent; alluding, in a manner hardly complimentary to the Ministry, to "the extraordinary circum-"stances under which two new commanding generals "arrived and joined the army, the one during, and "the other immediately after a battle, and those succes-"sively superseding each other, and both the original "commander, within the space of twenty-four hours;" declaring that all the officers whom the court had had the opportunity of examining "concurred in the great "advantages that were immediately gained to the "country of Portugal, to the army and navy, and to the "general service, by the conclusion of the convention at "that time."

The proceedings before the Court had gradually led the public to separate Wellesley's case from that of the other generals; and they began to resume their high opinion of his exploits and abilities, to which, on the opening of Parliament, at the end of January, 1809, the ministers set the seal by proposing in both houses a vote of thanks to him for the battles of Roriça and Vimiero, having successfully resisted a proposal of the opposition to connect Sir Harry Burrard with the latter victory; and his friends looked on this vote as a formal exculpation of him, and anticipated his speedy re-

employment with the army. As soon as he was released from his attendance on the Court of Inquiry, he had returned to Dublin to resume his official duties in that city, where Mr. Traill, the gentleman who had been appointed to act as his deputy during his absence, had died, and where there were many important matters requiring his attendance before the meeting of Parliament.

The early part of the session was a very busy one for him. The importance of the militia as a nursery for our regular army was becoming generally felt; and he brought in one or two bills to put that force in Ireland on a better footing, authorizing the Lord-Lieutenant to increase the sum paid as bounty if necessary; extending the powers of the governors and deputy-governors of counties; providing, in addition to the ballot, other modes of raising men, encouraging volunteers, and making the period of enlistment coextensive with the duration of the war. Another bill which he introduced had for its object the further promotion of inland navigation in Ireland, being the extension of an act passed in the last year of the Irish Parliament, which, in his opinion, had been productive of the greatest advantage to the country, by the encouragement which it had given to the cultivation of land through the facilities thus afforded for the conveyance of agricultural produce to a profitable market. And besides this official business, he had to defend the Government and himself from charges brought against both by Mr. Whitbread: against the Government for having allowed him to retain the office of Irish Secretary after his departure to the Peninsula in command of the army; and against himself for having received the salary while unable to discharge the duties of the office. His defence of him-

self was satisfactory enough; he proved that it was rather in compliance with the wish of the Lord-Lieutenant than with his own that he had retained the Secretaryship, and that that arrangement would have ceased had he remained long abroad; while, certainly, as long as he continued to hold the office, he might reasonably consider himself as entitled to the salary. But his argument that the Government was not to be blamed for thus allowing him to hold two manifestly incompatible offices, because no practical inconvenience had in fact resulted from his absence, and because there had still been an efficient government in Ireland, was less sound; and, indeed, he himself showed a secret conviction that it was so, when he assured the House that he should "in no future instance consent to hold "the office in the event of his being appointed to a "military command."

He was again called upon to defend the same parties in respect to the late armistice and convention, and to the military operations which had preceded them.* Lord Henry Petty, the present Marquess of Lansdowne, brought forward resolutions condemning the convention, and affirming that the causes which led to it were in a great measure "the misconduct and "neglect" of the ministers; and General Tarleton, who supported them in this and another debate in which the same subject was alluded to, attributed no small portion of blame to Wellesley himself, partly for not having opposed the armistice and convention, which, he maintained, would not have been concluded in the teeth of a strenuous resistance from him; and partly also for having, out of an ambitious desire to distinguish

* For this and all subsequent debates to which reference is made in these volumes see Hansard.

himself before the officers destined to supersede him should arrive, involved the army in operations of great danger, which ought not to have been undertaken by a force so deficient in cavalry as that under his command. In reply to these statements, Wellesley pointed out that the ministers had been misled by erroneous information which they had received from Sir C. Cotton, who reported that the bulk of the French force had moved into Spain, and that there were only 4,000 of them in Lisbon; and also that the operations which he, on his arrival in that country, had decided on undertaking were larger than those originally contemplated by the ministers; that the uncertainty in which they were as to where he would land, or whether he would be permitted to land at all, was a good reason for sending as few horses as possible, since those animals suffer greatly from a long detention on shipboard; and moreover, he asserted, of his own personal knowledge, that the deficiency of cavalry and artillery and equipment of various kinds, for which the ministers had been blamed, was in no degree whatever the cause of the armistice, nor of the convention, nor was it taken into consideration by any one of the officers concerned in the negotiation of either of those measures objected to. The only error with which he thought the Government at home chargeable, was that of having made arrangements which led to a change of commanders in the middle of an expedition. To such a change in the course of a campaign, no one he contended would have had a right to object; not even he himself, as the extent of the reinforcements sent out rendered the appointment to the command of officers senior to himself quite reasonable, if not inevitable.

In reference to the charges brought by Tarleton

against himself, he recapitulated many of the arguments that he had employed before the Court of Inquiry. He wholly denied that the army under his command had been in such danger as Tarleton had represented it; and he expressed his conviction that had that officer been in his place, he would not have hesitated to act as he himself had done, so sure was he that his conduct in the field would have been better than his advice in the senate. He adhered to his opinion, which had been confirmed by the evidence of all the general officers examined as witnesses before the Court of Inquiry, that had Sir Harry Burrard adopted the plan which he had proposed for the employment of Moore's division, the convention would have been never required, and he should not have had "the mortification that night of "hearing Lord Henry Petty propose a resolution de-"claring that the expedition to Portugal had disap-"pointed the hopes and expectations of the nation." He agreed with Lord Henry in regretting the appointment of the Court of Inquiry, which he considered had been very inconsistent in their report; and which had been a source of injustice and injury to himself. He still denied his responsibility for the armistice and the convention, to the details of both of which, in spite of General Tarleton's assertions, he maintained it to be notorious that he had objected; though, as soon as Sir Harry Burrard and Sir Hew Dalrymple had decided on their line of conduct, "he did everything that he could to "forward their objects, in spite of his differing from them "in opinion; and he had done so because he considered "this great distinction to exist between military and civil "inferior situations, that if, in a civil office, the inferior "differs materially from the superior, he ought to resign; "but in military appointments it is the duty of the

" inferior officer to assist his commander in the mode in " which that commander may deem his services most " advantageous." And this he avowed to be the principle which hitherto always had governed, and which in future always would govern his conduct.

It was at the beginning of this session that a parliamentary inquiry was instituted into the conduct of the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief, who had allowed an artful woman named Clarke to obtain an influence over him, which she had employed for her own pecuniary advantage, procuring money for the exertion of that influence to obtain from the Duke appointments and promotions in the army. And it was imputed to His Royal Highness that he had at least been aware of, and had connived at her having derived money from this source, even if he had not actually shared in her gains himself. Wellesley was examined before the Committee, and both as a witness and in his place in Parliament bore willing and ample testimony to the vast improvement which had taken place in every department of the army since the Duke had presided over it. He had not only established new regulations for promotion, which had previously been conducted in a most irregular manner, but he had adhered to them with the most invariable constancy. From his own personal knowledge, Wellesley asserted, that under the administration of His Royal Highness, the army* " was materially " improved in every respect; that the discipline of the " soldiers was improved; that owing to the establish- " ments formed under his directions, the officers were " improved in knowledge; that the staff of the army " was better and more complete than it had been before;

* See the evidence taken before the Committee, and published in the Journals of the House of Commons.

"that the cavalry was improved; that the system of "subordination among the officers of the army was "much better than it had been; and that the whole "system of the management of the clothing of the army, "the interior economy of the regiments, and everything "that related to the military discipline of the soldiers "and the military efficiency of the army, had been "greatly improved since the Duke had been appointed "Commander-in-Chief, and in consequence of his per-"sonal superintendence and personal exertions." Moreover, that by the reduction of the half-pay list, the Duke had given up a great deal of patronage previously belonging to his office, and "had saved immense sums to "the public." He considered, too, that the Duke had a particular claim to his own favourable testimony, since, as far as its condition had depended on his care and exertions, no army had ever been in a better state than that which had been entrusted to his command in the preceding summer. And he declared that "whatever "enthusiasm that army had felt in the execution of the "service in which they were employed was the result of "the example that had been set, and of the discipline "that had been established by the Commander-in-"Chief."

As is well known, the Committee acquitted the Duke of all knowledge of the corruption of his mistress: and then he, contented with having proved his innocence of the charges which more seriously affected his personal honour, and feeling that portions of his conduct were too imprudent to admit of justification, resigned his post as Commander-in-Chief; in which he was succeeded for a while by Sir David Dundas. But that officer proved from the first unequal to so arduous a duty. This unfitness was shown the more as our operations in the

Peninsula assumed a daily increasing importance: and all comparison between him and his predecessor served only to place the general excellences of the Duke's administration in a stronger light; so that after two or three years he was restored to the command, with the general consent of all parties, and discharged its duties to the day of his death with a vigour and prudence that abundantly justified his restoration.

CHAPTER X.

Sir John Moore is appointed to command in the Peninsula—He advances to Sahagun—Retreats—The Battle of Corunna—Soult invades Portugal—Wellesley is sent to command in the Peninsula.

IN the mean time, events of great importance had taken place in the Peninsula, of a complexion almost uniformly unfavourable to us and to our allies. The result of Wellesley's brief campaign had naturally encouraged the British Government to make additional efforts in that country; and after he, Dalrymple, and Burrard had returned home, they determined to send out such reinforcements as should raise the army at Lisbon to 35,000 men, of whom 5,000 should be cavalry; and placed the whole under the command of Sir John Moore, an officer possessed of every possible qualification for command, except a confidence in his own ultimate success. His instructions were to repair to the north of Spain, either marching by land from Lisbon, or conveying the troops which he had with him by sea to some one of the Galician ports; and then, when he had been joined by the reinforcements which were on their way from England, to advance towards Ebro, acting as far as possible in concert with the Spanish generals.

At the same time, Napoleon, who had prostrated his enemies on the eastern side of Europe so completely as, except from the restlessness of Austria, to have nothing for the present to fear in that quarter, resolved to conduct the war in Spain himself; and having drawn from his armies on the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe, 200,000 men, the choicest of the veterans who had planted their standards in the Austrian capital, who had struck down the Prussians at Jena, and the Russians at Friedland, he poured this vast and apparently irresistible host across the Pyrenees, and at the beginning of November, 1808, quitted Paris to assume the chief command of it. Six marshals of France—Victor, Bessières, Moncey, Lefébvre, Mortier, and Ney—and two of his most distinguished generals—Junot and St. Cyr—commanded the different corps among whom the whole country was parcelled out; while Lannes and Soult, and other chiefs of scarcely inferior renown, made up his personal staff. His whole force in the Peninsula exceeded 300,000 men; and there was nothing to oppose them but the British force under Moore, a few handfuls of Portuguese, and the feeble and ill-commanded Spanish armies; the British and their allies put together scarcely amounting to one-fourth of the French numbers.

At first but little resistance could be made to the overwhelming host of the invaders. Soult overran the north-eastern provinces and Leon: Lannes destroyed all the hopes of the Aragonese on the field of Tudela. Napoleon himself advanced to Madrid, while the central Junta, which had latterly directed the government, fled in dismay to Seville at his approach. He delivered a pompous reply to an address presented to him by the nobles, clergy, and others of the principal citizens, in which he announced his intention of driving the Eng-

lish armies from the Peninsula; and declared that there was no obstacle capable of retarding for any length of time the execution of his will. And in answer to their request that he would replace Joseph on the throne, he promised to do so, relinquishing his own rights of conquest, "as soon as all the citizens should assemble in "the churches and take an oath, not with the mouth "alone, but from the heart, to be true to the king, to love "and to support him." Meanwhile, he was preparing to send one army westward against Valencia, another to reduce the great province of Andalusia, important above all others for its wealth and its harbours on the Atlantic; a third was to subdue Galicia, while he reserved to himself the task of marching at the head of 60,000 men upon Lisbon, and recovering Portugal.

Moore, who by the end of the first week in November was on the frontier of that kingdom, had not advanced far into Spain before he found all the reports of Spanish enthusiasm and all the promises of Spanish aid alike illusory; and learnt that he had nothing on which to rely but his own skill and the courage of his men. To encounter the whole weight of Napoleon's force with his inferior numbers was impossible; but he conceived the idea that by marching to the north, and throwing himself upon the communications of the French with their own country, he might, perhaps, obtain an opportunity of striking a blow against Soult, who, with about 18,000 men, was encamped on the river Carion; or, that if he failed in that object, at all events he should induce the Emperor to suspend all other operations in order to pursue him; and should thus procure time for the Spaniards in the southern provinces to organize a resistance to the new invasion with which they were

threatened: while he trusted to his own vigilance to avoid compromising the safety of his own soldiers while rendering this important service to his allies.

The plan thus boldly conceived he carried out with the most self-possessed skill. He advanced as far as Sahagun, a town about fifty miles north of Valladolid, before Napoleon was aware of his movements. The moment that the tidings reached the French emperor, he suspended all other operations, and leaving only a small force in Madrid to overawe the citizens, he set out himself with 50,000 men in pursuit of the British general; sending despatches at the same to Soult, ordering that marshal if possible to lure Moore onward by a feigned retreat; or, if the British general should prove too wary to be thus tempted, and should retire before him, then to co-operate with himself in the pursuit so as to hem him in between their united forces.

Moore was fully aware that as soon as he had attracted the attention of Napoleon to himself he must retreat, and consequently moved on with such unceasing watchfulness as to baffle Soult's endeavours to tempt him to too great an advance. He received instant intelligence of Napoleon's departure from Madrid, and at once commenced a retrograde movement towards the coast, though its ultimate direction was as yet undetermined. He had left some regiments in Portugal for the security of that kingdom; and Sir David Baird, who commanded the reinforcements sent from England, had, while on his march to join the main body, left others at Lugo and Astorga: so that the whole British army at Sahagun was less than 24,000 men, of whom little more than 2,000 were cavalry; while Napoleon had 50,000 with him, of whom above 4,000 were cavalry,

and Soult had nearly 18,000 more. But Moore's courage rose with his difficulties and in spite of his disparity of numbers, nor did it nor his genius quail for a single moment, though the mere fact that they were retreating had greatly disheartened his men; and though the state of discouragement thus engendered had produced among them a sad neglect of discipline and subordination at a time when those qualities were more necessary than ever to enable them to overcome the hardships which surrounded them. For the roads, always bad, were rendered unusually difficult by the inclemency of the weather; the winter was one of unusual severity, aggravated by frequent and violent storms; their clothes, and especially their shoes, rapidly wore out; at night they were often destitute of shelter; and these horrors were increased by the failure of their supplies, which was so great that many lay down and died of cold and hunger on the way. Yet so rapid and skilful was Moore's retreat, so lion-like was the front which he showed to his pursuing foes, that they overtook him not till Napoleon himself, recalled by the news of the warlike attitude which Austria was assuming, had returned to France, leaving the future conduct of the pursuit to Soult, the Duke of Dalmatia, an officer whom he at all times esteemed as second only to himself in military vigour and capacity; and that Soult, after having been repelled with loss in one or two assaults on the British rear-guard, with which Moore himself was usually present, did not venture to attack him when at last, on the 6th of January, he faced round at Lugo, and offered the chance of a pitched battle to his pursuers.

They refused his challenge; but it was with sadly diminished numbers that, after a halt of two days, he resumed his march. He detached 3,000 men under General

Craufurd by a lower road, to prevent the enemy from turning his flank, and with the rest he pressed forwards with increased speed towards Corunna, where he expected to find ships in which to embark. But the time which he gained upon Soult by the celerity of his forced march from Lugo, in which the army had covered forty miles in one night and day, was dearly purchased by a loss of men equalling the whole loss which had been sustained since the commencement of the retreat, and which bore a fearful proportion to his original force. It was barely three weeks since he had quitted Sahagun; in that short time above 8,000 soldiers had disappeared from the British ranks; and though on the march he had been joined by the other regiments of Baird's division, yet, when he arrived at the destined place of embarkation, he could number little more than 14,000 men around his standards, whom he doubted not that Soult would not permit to depart without making one endeavour to overwhelm them with his superior numbers. He judged rightly. When he reached Corunna, the vessels which were to convey him away were not in sight, and the interval which elapsed before their arrival gave time for the advanced division of the French army again to overtake him. The other French divisions had been left far behind, but the numbers which Soult had with him amounted to 20,000 men, a force almost larger by one-half than the British, and encouraged by the long pursuit of a retreating enemy which not unnaturally bore in their eyes somewhat of the appearance of a triumph. With the prospect of a battle, however, confidence and discipline at once returned to the British soldiers; and though several officers of high rank advised the Commander-in-Chief to try to negotiate with Soult for an undisturbed withdrawal from the country, he nobly rejected such pusillanimous advice; and having

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embarked his sick, his cavalry—for whose employment the nature of the ground where the battle was to be fought afforded no opportunity—and the greater part of his artillery, he took up as strong a position as his scanty forces permitted, and calmly awaited the attack. It took place on the morning of the 16th of January, 1809. With what dauntless resolution the British soldiers, though outflanked by the long line of the enemy's outnumbering battalions, though harassed by the brilliant movements of a powerful cavalry force, though raked by heavy batteries which commanded nearly the whole of the line, repelled their foes at all points, even threatening themselves to become the assailants; with what skill their gallant commander, present everywhere where his presence was most required, directed their courage till he fell by a glorious death in the moment of victory, it belongs to another history to record; and it is too lastingly engraved on the memory of every Briton to require to be here repeated. Sir David Baird, the second in command, was also severely wounded; and Sir John Hope, on whom the command had devolved, had now no difficulty in embarking the army. In the course of the 18th, the last of the wounded were conveyed on board, and before the end of the month they reached England.

In the east of Spain the French had better success: the British admiral on that station, Lord Collingwood, Nelson's comrade at Trafalgar, and the worthy successor to that hero's command, by his skilful movements and untiring exertions greatly embarrassed their operations, and enabled many of the towns on the coast to make a prolonged defence; but still St. Cyr, the general commanding in that district, made steady progress, overthrew the Spaniards in several battles, and overran the greater part of Catalonia. Rosas, a port of great con-

sequence to the French operations, was taken, and Saragossa fell, after making a resistance which has ever since been a favourite theme for poets and historians, and which deserves to be long remembered as a proof of what patriotic heroism can effect, even when devoid of the means and appliances to which soldiers usually trust for success.

After Moore had marched into Spain, Sir John Cradock was sent out from England to Portugal to assume the command of the troops which that general had left behind him, and of a small body of Germans whom he took with him; the whole force, when united, amounting to less than 10,000 men, which, after some delay, caused by conflicting reports of the French movements, he concentrated near Lisbon, where, suspecting that he should soon receive instructions to abandon Portugal altogether, he made preparations to embark with promptitude in the event of such orders reaching him.

If, however, any such intention had at any moment been entertained by the British Government, it was speedily abandoned. The Opposition, indeed, who were at this time more than usually unscrupulous, had dwelt in Parliament on the miseries of the retreat to Corunna as a proof of the impolicy of continuing the war in Spain, which they pronounced to be a contest in which ultimate success could not be anticipated: but the ministers, with more accurate judgment, declared that the advantages obtained by Moore's advance had greatly outweighed the disasters sustained in his retreat; made a fresh treaty with Spain, and accepted the offer of the Portuguese Government to place the entire command of their army under a British general, who should have power to appoint other British officers to the command of the different regiments, and should have entire

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control over the whole military organization of the kingdom. This difficult but honourable charge the Portuguese hoped that Wellesley himself would have been induced to accept, but he declined it. It was, however, eagerly sought for by others, and fortunately for the Portuguese and for ourselves, the selection of the Ministry fell upon General Beresford, who, though subsequent events cast some doubt upon his capacity as an independent commander on a day of battle, displayed the most admirable talents for organizing and disciplining an army, and earned great and deserved renown by the admirable state of efficiency into which he gradually brought the disorderly levies now placed under his authority.

It was full time for the Portuguese to bestir themselves seriously. In the beginning of March, Soult, having reduced Corunna and Ferrol, and having overrun the whole province of Galicia, proceeded, by the Emperor's orders, to cross the Portuguese frontier. The Portuguese army, though they murdered their general, Freire, suspecting him of a design to abandon Braga to the invaders, defended it very feebly themselves; nor, in fact, were they in a condition to offer any very effectual resistance, being insufficiently supplied with arms or ammunition. Soult scattered them almost without an effort, and having occupied that town, advanced without delay towards Oporto, the second city in the kingdom, to defend which, its bishop, a meddling and turbulent prelate, had collected 40,000 men of one kind or another; regular infantry, cavalry, militia, and ordenanzas, or armed peasantry, though, when the French approached, he became alarmed and withdrew, leaving the future conduct of military operations to two generals named Lima and Pareiras. Soult's army was very inferior in numbers, but the inferiority of the Portuguese in skill and courage would have counterbalanced a far greater

disproportion. The only bold act on which they ventured was the murder of their commander, Lima: from the French they fled in every direction; and Soult, having inflicted upon them a slaughter of 10,000 men, without having lost more than 500 himself, on the 29th of March took possession of Oporto, and at once applied himself with great energy and judgment to establish his authority in that city; repressing the licentiousness of his soldiers, who regarded the Portuguese with peculiar animosity; and treating the inhabitants in general with great mildness; till he inspired such confidence in the principal citizens, that they intimated a desire for an independent government under a French ruler: and also a wish that that ruler should be the Duke of Dalmatia himself.

In the south the kingdom was not as yet invaded, but the French marshal, Victor, had utterly routed the Spanish general Cuesta at Medellin on the Guadiana, and had received positive orders from Napoleon to cross the frontier, his obedience to which might be daily expected. Cradock's forces were clearly unequal to cope either with him or with Soult; but the British general, having received some reinforcements, was preparing to move towards the north, not so much in the hope of being able to effect anything of importance himself, as with the object of restoring confidence to the Portuguese, who had been greatly alarmed at the preparations which he had made for evacuating their country, and at the progress which Soult was beginning to make to the south of the Douro, and who began, as was their fashion, to advance charges of treason against their chief governors, and to threaten them with the fate of Freire and Lima: when, at the beginning of April, he heard that Wellesley had been sent to supersede him, and that he himself was to quit Portugal and to repair to Gibraltar as Governor of that fortress.

The appointment of Wellesley to the chief command in Spain was entirely due to the sagacious judgment of Lord Castlereagh, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. In the recent debates on the transactions of the preceding year, while resisting the insertion of Sir Harry Burrard's name in the vote of thanks for the battle of Vimiero, he had spoken in the highest terms of that victory, and had pronounced that the whole merit of the campaign belonged exclusively to Wellesley. When he gave his sanction to Beresford's appointment as Marshal of the Portuguese army, a sanction which necessarily bound us to continue our efforts in the Peninsula, he had been mainly influenced in the resolution which he had formed, and in which he had induced his colleagues to concur, by a document which he had procured from Wellesley, asserting the practicability of the defence of Portugal. And now, when he was preparing to send out reinforcements sufficient to replace our army in that country on a respectable footing, appealing to Wellesley's past achievements, undoubtedly by far superior to those of any other officer in the whole British army, to his acquaintance with the country, and to the confidence with which the Portuguese regarded him, as was proved by their desire to place their own army under his authority, he urged his appointment to the chief command so strongly that, in spite of the recent date of his commission as Lieutenant-General, the rest of the Cabinet were brought over to Lord Castlereagh's opinion, and in the beginning of April, 1809, Wellesley was formally appointed to the command.

The paper with which he had furnished Lord Castlereagh was in itself a remarkable document, from the confidence which it expressed in the practicability of offering an effectual resistance to Napoleon in the Peninsula; a confidence which was probably shared at

that time by no other person in the world. Sir John Moore had pronounced it impossible to preserve Portugal from the grasp of the French emperor while he was master of Spain; but Wellesley declared that he had always been of opinion that, whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain, Portugal could be defended successfully; and defended chiefly by her own soldiers: the pecuniary assistance, indeed, which she would require from this country would be considerable; but the men sufficient to form a centre around which the Portuguese army might rally he estimated at an amount not exceeding 30,000 British soldiers of all arms; a smaller force than had been placed under Moore's command in the preceding autumn. The Portuguese army, according to his calculation, might be easily raised to an establishment of 70,000 men, and if placed entirely under the command of British officers, would speedily become capable, in conjunction with its British auxiliaries, of resisting an equal number of French troops: a force which it was not at all probable that the French emperor would be able at present to employ for the reduction of their country. He carried his views further: he pronounced that the resistance offered by this force to French aggression would not only be sufficient to save Portugal, but would also have a great effect on the contest in Spain, and might not improbably be eventually decisive of the struggle in that kingdom also.

With what soundness of judgment the views thus set forth were formed, how accurately they were fulfilled, how their fulfilment was owing mainly, it may almost be said solely, to the skill, the courage, the fortitude, the patience of the great man who thus unfolded them to the doubting Ministry, it will be the object of the rest of this volume to show.

CHAPTER XI.

Wellesley reaches Portugal—Finds plots in the French army—Forces the passage of the Douro—Surprises Soult at Oporto—Returns to the Tagus—Is embarrassed by great difficulties—Enters Spain.

WHEN the British ministers came to the resolution of confiding the future conduct of operations in the Peninsula to Wellesley, they had no very certain notion of the condition in which he would find affairs on his arrival in that country. They had, as has been mentioned in the last chapter, lately sent out some reinforcements to Cradock, but they were not by any means sure whether they would appear to that officer sufficient to enable him to hold his ground, or whether he might not have been already driven from Lisbon by Soult and Victor. Accordingly, the instructions given to the new commander were conditional, directing him to assume the command of the army if he found it at Lisbon; but in the event of Cradock having quitted the Tagus, enjoining him not to land in Portugal, but to proceed to Cadiz, and to disembark with the troops which were to accompany him at that port if the Spaniards would admit the British regiments into their garrison.

Having made all his arrangements in England, and

resigned his seat in Parliament, and the office of Irish Secretary, on the 16th of April Wellesley set sail from Spithead, and after a stormy passage, in which the "Surveillante," the vessel appointed to convey him and his staff, was nearly lost, though one of the finest frigates in the service, he arrived in the Tagus on the 22nd, where, finding that the army was still on Portuguese ground, it having been halted by Cradock at Leira, a town about seventy miles north of Lisbon, and lying on the high road from that city to Oporto, he at once assumed the command, and began with his usual promptitude to collect information with a view to the commencement of immediate operations.

As far as his reception by the allies whom he had come to succour could give him encouragement, nothing could be more cheering than the welcome with which he was greeted by the Portuguese. The populace of Lisbon hailed his arrival with unanimous acclamations; the Regency at once appointed him Marshal-General of all the national armies; while the capital and most of the principal towns were illuminated in his honour. What was less to be expected, he soon found great encouragement also from the condition of the enemy. Beresford, on hearing from him of his arrival, had at once repaired to Lisbon, which he reached on the 25th; and among other valuable information which he gave him, brought news that some of the officers of Soult's army had put themselves in communication with him, having formed a plot to revolt from Napoleon, and to seize their marshal and the other principal officers whom they looked upon as too firmly attached to their emperor to be tampered with. And the next day, one of the conspirators, Captain d'Argenton, arrived at Lisbon, and was conducted to Wellesley, whom he sought to induce to advance

vigorously against the Marshal, so as to compel him to concentrate his troops, and thus to give the conspirators an opportunity for the execution of their plot. Wellesley, though deeply impressed with the important effect which the revolt of a French army would produce, and though he believed in D'Argenton's sincerity, having become aware during his campaign of the preceding year of a very general feeling of discontent and disaffection which pervaded the French army, still was cautious not to pledge himself to any particular line of conduct, and told the Frenchman that the course which he should take must depend upon the state of affairs which should exist when he and his accomplices should seize the Marshal. He was not, in fact, very sanguine of their success, though he at once laid the matter before the ministers at home, thinking it desirable to be provided with their instructions in the event of the conspiracy having a prosperous issue; pointing out to them, with an utter absence of personal ambition, that a revolt such as was contemplated would be far more beneficial to the Peninsular nations and to the enemies of Napoleon than any defeat which he himself might be able to inflict upon Soult, which could affect only local interests and objects.

Though he did not communicate his own plans to Captain d'Argenton, he had already decided on a plan of operations which in a great degree tallied with his recommendation. The information which he had received represented the force which Soult had with him at Oporto as amounting to about 20,000 men. In his rear Ney was holding Galicia with 20,000 more, and Victor was threatening the frontier to the south of the Tagus with about 30,000. He himself had of British and German troops about 26,000, and the Portuguese.

under Beresford, amounted to 16,000, many of their regiments being already in a high state of discipline and efficiency. The Spanish general, Cuesta, was also observing Victor with an army of 20,000 men; but he was not much inclined to co-operate with the British commander, and Wellesley, though he had not yet had experience of his incapacity and obstinacy, already suspected that he should not find the assistance of him or of his army very serviceable.

If he had been influenced by military considerations alone, Wellesley would have preferred marching against Victor, as a successful movement against that marshal would have relieved both Lisbon and Seville from apprehension. The Junta of Spanish Estremadura was greatly alarmed for the safety of the southern provinces of Spain, and had presented him an address immediately on his landing, imploring him to turn his attention to that quarter; and the Portuguese Regency were inclined to agree with them that the south of Spain would prove the best base for his operations. But the importance of rescuing so wealthy a city as Oporto, and so rich and fertile a district as that occupied by Soult, from his grasp, outweighed these considerations, and he determined rather to march against him, thinking, in his heart, that it was very probable that he might not find it necessary to advance as far as the Douro; but that as soon as Soult heard of his being on the Mondego, he would at once evacuate Portugal, and thus enable him to turn his force against Victor. He had very little apprehension of that marshal at present invading Portugal, or indeed undertaking any operation at all till he could act in concert with Soult; and in the mean time he recommended Cuesta to maintain a strictly defensive position, and to be content with avoiding disaster of any

kind till he himself could return from the north to co-operate with him.

It is characteristic of the imperturbable coolness which never allowed Wellesley to neglect anything; that, as in India, while all the affairs of the government of Mysore were pressing on his attention, he found time to provide for Lady Clive's enjoyment of Tippoo's elephants and equipage for her journey; so now, while occupied with all the arrangements for the opening of the campaign, with negotiations with French malcontents, Portuguese ministers, and Spanish generals, he did not forget a commission which he had received from Mrs. Canning, the wife of the Foreign Secretary, to procure her some orange-trees, and took steps to have them sent to her before he left Lisbon.

Though, as has been mentioned, he did not anticipate any danger from Victor during his absence, he was resolved to trust nothing to chance; and accordingly left General Mackenzie with a strong division to watch the movements of the enemy on the eastern frontier of Portugal, and to guard the passes on the right of the Tagus. In the summer that river is fordable in many places, but that season had not yet arrived, and it was likely that a month would still elapse before the Tagus could be crossed without boats—a mode of moving of which Mackenzie would have no great difficulty in depriving the enemy. The rest of his army, consisting of 13,000 British and 3,000 German troops, to which he added 9,000 of the Portuguese under Beresford, he set in motion on the 1st of May, and on the 5th he concentrated his force at Coimbra on the Mondego, where he halted for a couple of days, awaiting the arrival of supplies, which were being conveyed by sea from Lisbon, and being desirous also to give time for Beresford to advance sufficiently to combine his movements with his own. He already

began to experience some of the difficulties which for so long a time embarrassed all his operations. From want of experience, the commissariat department was very ineffective, the amount of horse-artillery was inadequate to the requirements of the army, while the horses belonging to that branch of the service which he had with him were in a very bad state, being diseased, old, and out of condition; and those of the cavalry were in many instances equally unfit for active use. In addition to his other distresses, he was in great want of money, without which it was absolutely impossible for him to be able to reckon on his future movements. This was a difficulty with which the French marshals never had to contend, acting as they did on their master's principle, of making war support war, and compelling the country which they had invaded to supply them with the means of continuing their invasion; but it pressed heavily on Wellesley, and he wrote at once to the Secretary of the Treasury on the subject, promising "to keep the expenses as low as possible," and suggesting measures for the adoption of the British Treasury in order to keep him supplied.

On the 9th of May he moved forward from Coimbra, sending Beresford with his Portuguese, supported by a small division of British troops, by an inland road to Lamego, in order to cross the Douro at some distance from the sea, so as to turn the French left, and to cut them off from the province of Tras os Montes, while he himself marched with the rest by the direct road to Oporto, hoping, among other objects, to crush Soult's right, which was on the southern side of the river, before it was aware of his vicinity. The next day beheld his first encounter with the enemy. Having transported General Hill's division in boats across a long narrow

creek, known as the lake of Ovar, he by this movement turned Soult's right, and fell upon General Franceschi, who, with the main body of the French cavalry, and some infantry and artillery, was posted in a village called Albergaria Nuova. Another corps of the same division, under General Merlet, was a few miles in the rear. Franceschi would have been wholly cut off had not the badness of the roads, and an impracticable ravine of which Wellesley was not aware, interposed to impede the advance of a part of the British force; but the French were easily compelled to abandon their position, and, after losing all their guns and a few prisoners, to fall back on the rest of the division, which was driven in in like manner the next day with great additional loss.

The defeated French generals retired with all speed across the Douro, and then destroyed the bridge by which they had passed. The news which they brought decided Soult to evacuate Oporto, and having directed all the boats to be secured, and having sent the troops which had just crossed the river to patrole the right bank, and to watch all the points at which any attempt on our part to pass might be apprehended, the French marshal took measures to collect his outlying detachments at Amarante, on the Tamega, intending to retreat himself with the main body in that direction on the 13th, in order to establish himself at Salamanca, in Spain. It was, however, no part of Wellesley's plan to give him so much time, or to allow him the security of an unmolested retreat. He had marched in pursuit of the retiring French at daybreak, and soon arrived close to the Douro, though his army was screened from the view of the French in the city by a hill which was occupied by a building called the Convent of Sarea. It was indispensable for the safety of Beresford's corps which

was already on the other side of the river, and which, neither in respect of numbers nor of efficiency—being composed of soldiers who were little better than recruits—was capable of coping with the French, that there should be as little delay as possible in reaching the right bank; but the Douro was rapid, deep, and 300 yards wide, presenting an obstacle which might well have been looked upon as insurmountable. The only circumstance favourable to the British general was the winding character of the river, which prevented its course above the city from being seen from the French head-quarters, and the expectation which Soult had formed that Wellesley's attempt to cross it, if indeed he was hardy enough to make such attempt at all, would be made between the city and the sea, where some assistance might be expected from the British squadron which the French marshal believed to be attending on his movements. Wellesley, however, was too well aware of the line of retreat on which Soult had determined (being, indeed, able to see the baggage of the army already moving along the road towards Amarante) to think of choosing a line which would effectually separate him from Beresford, and after carefully reconnoitring the opposite bank, perceived at a small distance to the east of the city, and nearly opposite to the convent where he was himself posted, a large building, called the Seminary, which, being open towards the river, and being also surrounded by high walls having only one entrance by an iron gate on the landward side, promised to afford a favourable landing-place, and also a good position in which a small body of troops might for a while maintain themselves. He had already sent General Murray with a small division of cavalry and infantry, and two guns, further up the river, to a place called Avintas, to en-

OPORTO.
A Hill surmounted by a small Building where Soult himself was.
B The point at which General Sher. broke passed.
C A rock called Serra surmounted by a Convent where Wellington posted himself.
D The Seminary to which Paget and Hill crossed.
E The point at which Murray crossed.
F The road by which Murray's Devision advanced after its Passage of the Douro.
G The road to Valonga by which the French retreated.
Road to Valonga
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
D O U R O
R I V E R
Avintas
Vincent Brooks Lith.
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deavour to cross at that point, in which that officer succeeded without difficulty; and he had now only to discover some means, were they ever so scanty, of crossing himself. While he was posting a battery on the convent hill, to command the passage and the opposite bank, Colonel Waters, an officer whose enterprising spirit was often found of signal use during this war, found a small skiff, in which he rowed across the river with a guide, and presently returned with three or four large boats, which had been concealed among the bushes under the left bank. Wellesley had just learnt that Murray had effected his passage of the river at Avintas when Waters's success was announced to him; "Well, "let the men cross," was his brief reply; and without waiting for further orders, an officer and twenty-five men of the 3rd regiment—the Buffs, as they were called—entered the first boat, and ferried themselves across: others quickly followed, but the third boat had hardly touched the opposite shore when their passage was perceived by the French, and a fierce attack was at once made upon the Seminary. Wellesley, however, had not miscalculated the support which the battery on the convent hill was able to give the handful of men whom he had thus ventured to throw into the middle of the French army. The enemy brought musketry and artillery against the walls of the building, severely wounding General Edward Paget, who had been among the first to cross; but General Hill, who had followed him close, took the command, and conducted the remaining operations on that side of the river with great judgment. Our guns swept the ground on the side nearest to the city, so as to prevent the success of any attempt on the part of the French to force an entrance except by the gate. There, indeed, the contest was for a time so stubborn

that Wellesley could hardly be dissuaded from passing over himself to conduct it; but meanwhile the citizens, exulting at our progress, brought across more boats, so that our troops were soon able to pass in large bodies, and the city was won. Murray's division was seen to approach from Avintas, and the French began to retire in great disorder, leaving behind them fifty-eight guns, and a great number of prisoners, besides 700 sick and wounded, who were in the hospitals of Oporto. General Murray was the same officer who had shown such a want of skill and energy in India at the time of Monson's * retreat, and who subsequently, by his deplorable weakness and incompetency at Tarragona, brought on our arms the only disgrace that befel them during the war. On this occasion, he had it in his power to overwhelm the retreating columns as they passed before him in hopeless confusion, which either from timidity or sheer incapacity he made no effort to increase. It was in vain that some of his staff pointed out to him what a glorious opportunity was offered to him to strike a safe blow which must have been decisive. He could not be prevailed upon to fire a single shot. It was in vain that, as if to show what might have been in his power to effect, Brigadier-General Charles Stewart,† an accomplished and at all times a daring cavalry officer, ventured without his orders to lead two squadrons against the French rear-guard, which he routed with ease. Even the sight of this successful attack could not tempt Murray to support it, and Stewart was forced to fight his way back unaided to the main body. Our loss had been under 120 men killed and wounded; that of the French was above four times that number.

Good reason had Wellesley to extol the conduct of his

* See p. 85. † The late Marquess of Londonderry.

troops, who had now marched eighty miles in four days, and had crowned their labours with so important an achievement. And at least equal reason had his troops to feel confidence in their chief, whose daring spirit had conceived so audacious an enterprise as the passage in broad daylight of a large river guarded by a powerful army and the surprise of one whom Napoleon looked upon as the most skilful of his generals, and whose provident sagacity and celerity of movement had effected its successful execution with such inconsiderable loss. So complete had been the surprise of the French, that Wellesley, on taking possession in the afternoon of the head-quarters which Soult had just vacated, found a dinner almost ready which the French marshal had ordered for himself, but which was now eaten by his conqueror and his staff with a well-deserved appetite.

The next day, Soult was allowed to retreat unmolested, as Wellesley was fully occupied in bringing the rest of his army, his artillery, baggage, and stores across the Douro; but his first care of all was for his sick and wounded enemies who had fallen into his hands; and his very first step after entering Oporto was to despatch a letter to the French marshal, explaining to him that his own medical staff was only sufficient for his own army, and requesting Soult to send surgeons to Oporto to attend to the French invalids, promising that they should be sent back in safety to their camp as soon as they had discharged that duty. He also issued a proclamation to the citizens, forbidding them to offer any violence to their enemies thus left at their mercy. They were now, he said, under his protection, and he was determined that they should fully enjoy it. On the 14th, he moved with all his army in pursuit, not being as yet quite certain which route the enemy had taken; but he presently

heard that, while he himself had been crossing the Douro, Beresford had struck a blow of great importance against Loison, who, with 6,000 men, occupied Amarante, a town on the Tamega, with a bridge which afforded the only passage for the retreating army into the province of Tras os Montes. Beresford, whose operations had been marked with great vigour, pressed him so sternly that Loison, who, though a man of cruel disposition, had hitherto shown himself a brave, if not a very skilful soldier, now emulated the supineness of Murray, and abandoned his important position without firing a shot in its defence. Soult's energy—and he was always prompt and energetic—rose with his difficulties. His retreat in the direction which he had intended that it should take was cut off; but without losing a moment, he destroyed his guns and baggage, and everything that could impede his progress, and moving over the mountains, united his force with Loison's division at Guimaraens, and in spite of all the difficulties caused by mountainous paths and most tempestuous weather, reached Braga on the morning of the 15th, where he reorganized his army, and then pressed on with unabated speed towards the northern frontier.

On the afternoon of the 16th, Wellesley overtook his rear-guard at Salamonde, and drove it in with considerable loss, though the late hour at which the attack was made saved it from total destruction; and on the 18th he reached Montalegre, where, finding that Soult had taken a road over the mountains to Orense in Galicia, he desisted from the pursuit, and returned to Oporto. According to his estimate, which there is no reason to think exaggerated, since he had left Coimbra he had caused Soult the loss of one-fourth of his army, besides that of the whole of his artillery and equipments.

All the French slain, however, had not fallen by British swords; many had been put to death by the exasperated peasantry in retaliation for the outrages which they had committed in their retreat. Wellesley himself has remarked that the French army in the time of Napoleon, being drawn from many different nations, would not endure the same severity of discipline as that which he himself had established in that under his command; but the outrages now committed by Soult's army far exceeded the ordinary licence of war. Acts of pillage and violence can never be wholly prevented, and the recent example of our own soldiers in Moore's expedition had shown that a retreat sadly relaxes the usual bonds of discipline; but Soult's troops marked their discomfiture by ceaseless acts of wanton and profitless atrocity, murdering unoffending peasants, whose sole crime was that of not being well-wishers to their invaders, and destroying property which they were unable to carry off by burning the houses and villages which lay in their path. It was no wonder that the stragglers from such an army found no mercy at the hands of the exasperated natives, and Wellesley, as he advanced in the pursuit, found the road strewed with the carcases of French soldiers, who had been put to death the moment that they wandered from their ranks, or who had fallen behind, exhausted by the inevitable hardships of a retreat in which everything was sacrificed to the one object of escaping from their triumphant pursuers.

The moment that Soult was driven out of Portugal, Wellesley retraced his steps with all speed towards the Tagus. On the 19th he received news from Mackenzie that Victor had quitted Merida, and had made himself master of the town and bridge of Alcantara, on the Tagus, a place only a few miles distant from the Portu-

guese frontier, though he had not heard that that marshal, on becoming aware of Soult's disaster at Oporto, had returned to his former position. This circumstance, however, would not, if known, have abated Wellesley's desire to lose no time in commencing operations against him. Before quitting Coimbra he had requested from the Ministry at home permission to extend his operations into Spain, if he should consider his doing so likely to be beneficial to that country, and consistent with the safety of Portugal; and though the discretionary powers which he had requested did not reach him till the second week in June, he began without delay to communicate with Cuesta, with the view of making a combined attack upon Victor. At the same time, he sent to Mackenzie, who was inclined to be alarmed at the seizure of Alcantara, and who had not yet learned to put confidence in the Portuguese soldiers, instructions how to act on every conceivable alternative; concluding his directions in a spirit which well deserved the intelligent obedience which it was calculated to encourage, bidding that general act boldly on his instructions, and assuring him that he himself would bear all the responsibility of the arrangements which he was enjoining.

If his instructions had pointed out the defeat of the French in Spain, rather than the deliverance of Portugal, as the principal object of the campaign, he would probably have complied now with the request of the Marquis Romana, one of the most respectable of the Spanish generals, and would have gone to his assistance in Galicia and the Asturias; but the safety of Portugal was the first thing to be provided for, and that was more menaced by Victor's presence in Spanish Estremadura than by the utmost exertions that Ney and Soult could make in the north; while Wellesley also considered

(and subsequent events justified his anticipations) that the movement which he was contemplating against Victor would of itself relieve the northern provinces of Spain, by alarming Soult for the safety of Madrid.

During his period of command in India, he had more than once urged with great zeal the claim of his army to prize money, as the reward for their services to which they naturally and rightfully looked; on one occasion, as has been seen, advocating what he conceived to be its right in direct opposition to the opinion of his brother, the Governor-General. He now, without having in the least abated his desire that his troops should derive more substantial benefit than honour from their exploits, showed that the claims of moderation and justice were in his eyes paramount to that and every other consideration. When we recovered Oporto, we found in the harbour several vessels belonging to France, or to countries under French influence; we likewise found others originally belonging to English merchants, which had fallen into the power of the French when Soult became master of the city. These last also Admiral Berkeley, the officer commanding our fleet on that station, considered so far in the light of prizes, that he thought the fleet and army entitled to salvage for restoring them to their owners; but Wellesley, though, as he truly said (for he was still a very poor man), it would have been very convenient to him to have had the Admiral's opinions confirmed, at once protested against it, pointing out that it had no foundation in law, since everything taken by us in Portugal must of necessity belong to the Government of Portugal, of which we were acting as allies, and urging that, even if such a claim were tenable in strict law, it must inevitably be so offensive to the feelings of that

Government that it would be most unwise to advance it.

After his return to the south, he remained encamped at Abrantes till the end of June; and this month of comparative inaction began to bring to light some more of the difficulties with which he was for a long time destined to contend. Some of them arose from the unwise conduct of the Government at home, who had given Mr. Frere, our ambassador in Spain, a power of interfering with the army, even to the extent of drawing men from it to reinforce the garrison at Cadiz, if he could procure the consent of the Spaniards to such a measure; and Mr. Villiers, our envoy at Lisbon, appears to have thought that he also had some similar power, and proposed different movements which he conceived that some of the inferior officers might execute without directions from Wellesley. These suggestions, however, as he had no power to cause them to be carried out, were productive of nothing beyond some slight annoyance to the general, who contented himself with pointing out the objections to them; with assuring his adviser that he would take care the troops should have enough to do before the end of the campaign; and with explaining to him that, as "the foundation of all military plans "is compounded of the situations of one's own troops, "those of the allies, and those of the enemy," if he could not be certain of the first, it would be impossible for him to form, much less to execute any plan whatever. Villiers, who was an able man, acquiesced in the force of these remonstrances; and as Mr. Frere was about this time replaced at Cadiz by the Marquess Wellesley, Sir Arthur was relieved from all apprehension of further trouble in this way. But his other difficulties were of a more enduring character, because the causes of

them lay deeper, being founded partly on the professional jealousy of his own officers, and partly on their ignorance of the strict requirements of military discipline, which it took a long time to eradicate.

One of the most perplexing of these difficulties also arose from the ill-considered arrangements made by our own Government. The Portuguese service was not popular in England, and in order to encourage British officers to enter it, the practice was introduced of giving to all who were willing to do so a step in the British service; while the Portuguese promoted them another step on entering theirs: so that a captain became a British major and a Portuguese lieutenant-colonel; and if the regiment to which he was attached were sent to serve with a British regiment, he became entitled to command British officers who had previously been his superiors. It was not strange that the officers of our own regiments were greatly dissatisfied with this state of things; and those who entered the Portuguese service were not better pleased: since so capriciously did the Prince Regent of Portugal distribute military rank that no one could long be certain of his position. Many of our officers preferred going home to serving in concert with the Portuguese; while so great was the discontent among those who had entered the Portuguese service, that several whose original engagement allowed them to do so quitted it, and those who had bound themselves more steadily to it wished to abandon it, and were only retained in it by compulsion.*

Wellesley felt deeply, and expressed to the authorities at home the pain he felt at for the first time in his life

* See particularly Wellesley's letter to Lord Castlereagh. August 25, 1809. Dispatches, v. 82.

commanding a dissatisfied army. His opinion was that what had been originally advisable was to give Beresford a large staff of the ablest officers which the British service could afford; but that the measure of appointing British officers to Portuguese regiments was generally useless, and sometimes mischievous. Since, however, that step had been taken, he earnestly recommended that the practice of giving those British officers who should serve in the Portuguese army commissions of a higher rank than they held in their own service should be discontinued; or that, at least, when employed in concert with British regiments, they should rank with the officers of those regiments only by the dates of their British commissions. Unhappily, the Commander-in-Chief, on whose decision the matter depended, was no longer the Duke of York; and Sir David Dundas paid no attention to Wellesley's representations, but left things as they were, deciding, as Wellesley complained, "without reference to circumstances, or to the feelings "or opinions of the individuals on whom his decision "was to operate, but rather as if men were stocks and "stones."

The conduct of the Portuguese also caused him no little embarrassment. Though the common people hated the French, they hated military service more. They could hardly be induced to enlist, and it was often necessary to send the new recruits in chains to head-quarters, to prevent their deserting before they joined their regiments; officers of the highest rank absented themselves at pleasure from their battalions, even when employed on active service; the civil authorities showed the greatest indifference to the duty of furnishing the army with the necessary supplies; and the citizens of Oporto, which Wellesley had just delivered from the French,

made bitter complaints of his having, as they said, compelled them to lend him 10,000*l.* for the use of the army, though they knew that it would be repaid almost instantly, and though the whole extent of the compulsion employed was that he, after laying before an assembly of their principal merchants a statement of the urgency of his temporary distress, had told them also, "that if "they refused to assist the army with the money wanted "after all that we had done for them, the world, when "the story should be told, would not believe it."

But a far greater source of uneasiness to its commander was the conduct of his own troops. They had suffered considerably in their march back to their present quarters. The weather had been terrible, the soldiers had worn out their shoes, their supplies were scanty and irregular, some days they wanted even bread, and owing to some unaccountable supineness of the ministers at home, there was no money whatever at their General's disposal. As long as they were in front of, or in pursuit of the enemy, the men bore their hardships gallantly, and deserved, as they received, the highest praise; but the moment that the excitement of actual warfare ceased, they began to disregard all the rules of discipline and duty, to plunder and to commit all sorts of outrages upon the inhabitants of the country, thus creating a bitter ill-feeling towards the army, and often provoking a bloody retaliation. Wellesley's vexation and indignation were excessive: he declared that he had long been of opinion that a British army could bear neither success nor failure, and that their present conduct proved the truth of this judgment. He took at once the most energetic measures to stop these disorders, ordering the roll to be called every hour for officers as well as privates in some regiments whose misconduct had been the most

glaring, and declaring that, if it continued, he would make an official complaint of them, and send them home in disgrace. He did write a strong letter on the subject to the Secretary of State, telling him that even the sick whom he left behind in his hospitals found themselves strong enough to commit outrages, and making great complaints of the inefficiency of the law under which alone such offenders could be tried, and of the desire evinced by courts-martial to acquit those brought before them. He wished the law therefore to be amended; but the measure which he pressed more earnestly was one which should give him, as Commander-in-Chief, the power of rewarding those who distinguished themselves by good conduct, a power enjoyed by generals in most other countries, and down to a not very distant period by those in the British service also, and one which certainly seems indispensable to the maintenance of their dignity and to the effectual exercise of their authority. He complained at a somewhat later period that he who was "commanding the largest British army that had been "employed for many years, and who had upon his hands "certainly the most extensive and difficult task that was "ever imposed upon a British officer, had not the power "of making even a corporal." He declared "that it "was impossible that this system could last;" and that, however it might suffice "for trifling expeditions and "short services, those who are to superintend the disci-"pline, and to excite and regulate the exertions of the "officers of the army during a long-continued service, must "have the power of rewarding them by the only mode in "which they can be rewarded, that is, by promotion." He complained further, that even the army itself was not aware of his want of power in this respect. He protested that he had no personal object to serve in desiring

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such power, but urged forcibly that, "to give him the "power of rewarding the services of those who exerted "themselves zealously in the service was the best mode "to stimulate others to similar exertions:" and that, even admitting "the system of promotion by seniority, "exploded in other armies, to be the best for Great "Britain, it would still be an advantage that those who "became entitled to it should receive it immediately, "and from the hand of the person who is obliged to "expose them to danger, to enforce discipline, and to "call for their exertions;" and moreover, that "this "practice would be entirely consistent with the unvaried "usage of the British navy."

There can, we should suppose, be no question whatever that the power which he thus desired to possess is one which ought to be entrusted to every one placed in the chief command of an army on service. But forcible as his arguments were, they were too greatly at variance with the practice and with the prejudices of those in authority to meet with any attention. And it was not till the late war with Russia that his views were even partially carried out by a regulation enabling the Queen to promote highly-distinguished officers without regard to seniority; and even then no power of conferring instant reward was given to the general. It is true that the countless acts of adventurous gallantry, of calm presence of mind, and of professional skill performed by our soldiers under the present system have abundantly shown that the military spirit of our army does not stand in such need of the incentive to exertion for which its great General contended that it will not display itself without it; but in the first place it is clear, whether the rest of the army does or does not need such a spur, that those who have set a gallant example deserve

their reward; and it is discreditable, not to them, but to the country, that they should not receive it. And in the second place, an instant reward of the description recommended by Wellesley would be beneficial to the country itself, which would be better served under a system by which its bravest and most skilful officers were at once placed in positions of command. Nor does it appear that any practical difficulty could arise from placing at least a certain number of the death vacancies caused by a battle at the disposal of the commander, on whom the feeling of responsibility, and the consciousness that the eyes of the whole army were on him as the dispenser of such rewards, would be a check sufficient to prevent the slightest suspicion of favour or partiality.

He was equally solicitous for other commanders as for himself, and remonstrated in most uncompromising terms with the ministers at the Court of the Brazils, who, by interfering with the promotions in the Portuguese army, had violated the engagement originally entered into with Beresford, by which it had been stipulated that the power of rewarding the officers and soldiers of his army should be vested exclusively in that officer. He pointed out that this power had been lodged in the Marshal's hands, not as a compliment to him, but for the benefit of the Prince Regent and of his kingdom, and that any interference with it must be prejudicial to them both, and subversive of all local authority in Portugal; and at a subsequent period he announced to them that he himself would not remain in the country if they interfered with the appointments of Beresford's staff.

For a while his severity towards offenders of his own army had some success; but the renewal of active operations against the French contributed more than either his threats or his punishments to restore discipline. On

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the 11th of June he received the permission which he had requested, to extend his operations into Spain; and declaring, in well-grounded anticipation of coming triumph, that "the ball was now at his foot, and that he "hoped he should have strength enough to give it a "good kick;" he began at once to communicate to Cuesta the plans which he had formed for their combined action. The hardships which the army had recently suffered had for a time considerably reduced its numbers; but since his return from the north, he had received a reinforcement which had raised his effective strength to 22,000 men, and he had intelligence that 8,000 more were on their way to join him: Beresford had about 15,000 Portuguese at Fuente Guinaldo, a place a little to the south of Ciudad Rodrigo, while Cuesta had 38,000 Spaniards in Spanish Estremadura; and Venegas, another Spanish general, had 25,000 more on the southern border of New Castile.

CHAPTER XII.

He marches against Victor—Defeats him and Joseph at Talavera—Misconduct of the Spaniards—Soult passes the mountains—Wellesley falls back to Badajoz—Is made a Peer, by the title of Viscount Wellington.

WELLESLEY, from his first landing in the Peninsula, had always considered the defeat of Victor as the most important object of his operations. And not having yet learnt the worthlessness of the Spaniards as soldiers, nor the danger of trusting to their reports of their own strength, which they always exaggerated, or of that of the enemy, which they invariably underrated; or of events, stories of which they constantly invented without any foundation whatever, he had no doubt that the forces thus available were sufficient to enable him to defeat Victor, and to advance upon Madrid. And as soon as he had overcome the difficulties which the want of supplies, and especially of shoes and money, had interposed to his advance, he began his first march into Spain. After a careful consideration of the different lines of advance which were open to him, he decided upon taking the road of Plasencia, so as to come upon the Tagus at Almaraz: a movement which, if it could be concealed for a time from the French marshal, would probably enable

the allies to cut off his retreat, and which, even if it did not escape his notice, would at all events disable him from defending the Tagus. But it was far easier to devise a plan which would be successful against the French than to induce Cuesta to agree to it. That general was at once incapable, vain, and obstinate; he also distrusted Wellesley because of the care which he took of his troops: and, in reply to his proposal, suggested a plan which would have separated his forces from the British, would have enabled Victor to attack either army separately, and would have prevented them, under any circumstances, from being able to operate upon his line of retreat. It shows the character of the man, that the plan which Wellesley proposed, and to which he thus objected, was almost identical with one which he had previously devised himself. With admirable patience the British general modified his plans sufficiently to conciliate the Spaniard, and subsequently intelligence which was received of Victor's having retired from his position at Merida across the Tagus to Madrid caused Cuesta to change his mind, and to express a wish that Wellesley should march by Plasencia, as he had originally intended.

Wellesley had long been ready to commence operations, but had been delayed by the want of money. On the 25th of June, a sufficient supply was received from England; on the 27th, the army, consisting of 18,000 infantry and artillery, 3,000 cavalry, and 30 guns, was put in motion, and on the 2nd of July it crossed the Spanish frontier, Beresford being stationed with his Portuguese brigade to watch the Puerto Perales, one of the only two passes practicable for artillery, which led from Leon and Old Castile into the valley of the Tagus.

The army marched in two columns, one on each side

of the Tagus; the head-quarters reached Plasencia on the 8th, and two days afterwards a reinforcement of nearly 2,000 men was received, and news also reached head-quarters that General Craufurd had left Lisbon with three regiments, and was hastening to join Wellesley. Victor also had been advancing towards Plasencia, in the hope of being able to maintain his army by supplies drawn from the fertile valley in which that town stands, when, a few days before the British army commenced its march, King Joseph, alarmed by a report of the advance of Venegas towards Madrid, sent Victor orders to retire to Talavera, a town on the Tagus, a few miles below its junction with the Alberche.

From Plasencia Wellesley proceeded to Cuesta's head-quarters, to confer with him on future measures; if that could be called a conference in which the conferring parties had no conversation; for Wellesley was not yet acquainted with more than the rudiments of the Spanish language, and Cuesta, though well acquainted with French, thought it beneath his dignity to speak it. Fortunately his adjutant-general, General O'Donoju, was not of a rank to be entitled to such scruples, and with him Wellesley proceeded to settle his plan of operations. From letters of Soult's which had been intercepted, he learnt that that marshal was on his way to co-operate with Victor; though they had most inaccurate ideas of his force, which they believed not greatly to exceed 10,000 men, while it did in reality amount to above three times that number. With some difficulty Wellesley persuaded his ally to promise a force sufficient to guard the Puerto de Baños, the other mountain pass by which Soult's advance might be apprehended (though the Spaniard performed his promise so inefficiently that the detachment which he employed on that important

service consisted of only 600 men): but to other proposals of the British general, Cuesta positively refused to agree; though at last he consented to combine with Wellesley on the 18th of March to attack Victor, in the hope that while they defeated him, Venegas, with his army, and Sir Robert Wilson, an enterprising English officer who had been appointed to the command of a partisan corps of Portuguese, might find an opportunity of making an impression on the capital. The army advanced but slowly, being hindered by a deficiency in the means of transport which the Spanish authorities had undertaken to provide, but about which they showed themselves wholly indifferent. On the 20th it reached Oropeza, and halted a day for the necessary rest after the fatigues of the march through a difficult country. On the 22nd the English and Spanish armies advanced, and came into the neighbourhood of the French posts, and then Wellesley began to find out the full extent of the difficulties which his colleague's impracticable disposition threw in his way. Good reason had he to complain to Lord Castlereagh that the Spanish general grew worse and worse every day, that it was impossible to do business with him, or to calculate on the success of any operation in which he was concerned. The Spaniards were the first to come up with the French rear-guard; but though Cuesta had 18,000 men at hand, while Lautour Maubourg, who commanded the French, had scarcely 3,000, the Spaniard could not be prevailed on to attack them, and the French retired unmolested behind the Alberche. The next evening, Wellesley went to Cuesta's tent to arrange an attack upon the French for the ensuing morning, but the General had gone to bed. The next morning at daybreak the English troops were under arms, but the

General and his aides-de-camp were still asleep, and might not be awakened till seven o'clock. And even then they had not had sleep enough.

When, after the battle of the Nile, Nelson was considering the means which were supposed to be available to check the progress of the French in Italy, he summed up his opinion by declaring that General Mack could not move without six carriages; probably the great Admiral merely meant to indicate in a figurative manner his contempt for the imbecility which he had detected; but if the expression had been applied to Cuesta, though the Spaniard was not a coward like the Austrian, it would have fallen short of the truth. Though not up early enough for a battle, he agreed to join Wellesley in an examination of the enemy's position, and arrived on the ground for the purpose in a coach and six; and then as the ground presently became too rough for such a conveyance, he alighted, and under a shady tree made himself amends for the curtailment of his night's rest by going to sleep. Having thus completed his reconnaissance, he agreed to attack the French the next morning; but Victor, apparently through the treachery of some of Cuesta's staff, had intelligence of the design, and retired towards the King's army. Cuesta, elated beyond measure at having thus, as he fancied, compelled the French marshal to retreat, was eager to pursue him; but Wellesley, who found that the Spanish Government made no effort whatever to provide his army with the necessary supplies and means of conveyance for them, which they had promised to furnish, though they kept their own army fully supplied, refused to advance, and in fact was unable to do so with starving troops. His indignation was excessive: his natural feeling of concern for the distress of his soldiers was,

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as he declared himself, increased by the knowledge that they had been brought into the country where they were thus unworthily treated "by his own act, and on "his own responsibility:" and being determined to put a stop to such a state of affairs, he gave Cuesta and the Junta notice that he would not move beyond the Alberche, and that he would even quit Spain altogether if he did not receive the supplies to which he was entitled. "He had never seen an army so ill-treated "in any country, nor, considering that all depended "upon its operations, one which deserved good treat-"ment so much."

Cuesta seconded his representations to the Junta, and agreed in the propriety of Wellesley's halting till he received the supplies to which he was entitled; but full of elation, and wishing perhaps to keep all the glory to himself, pushed on with his own troops alone in pursuit of the French, without even communicating his plans to his ally.

In spite of his indignation, Wellesley could not see so rash a movement without concern; and therefore sent General Sherbrooke with a small force across the Alberche, as far as Cazalegas, to support Cuesta when driven back—as he foresaw that he soon would be—and then, expecting that as soon as Victor had joined the king's forces, their united armies would return and attack him, he examined the neighbourhood carefully, in order to find some favourable position on which to receive them. He was not deceived in his anticipations. On the morning of the 26th of July the hostile armies, in number about 50,000 men, with 80 pieces of artillery, attacked the advanced guard of the Spaniards, which fled almost at the first sight of their approach, and would have been destroyed had it not been for the timely support of

Sherbrooke's brigade. Wellesley, who had hastened to the scene of action the moment that he heard the sound of firing, urged Cuesta to withdraw to a position which he had selected in front of Talavera; but the Spaniard refused, replying that his troops would be disheartened by any further retreat; though they had already fled with such precipitation that it was not easy to see what worse effect any additional discouragement could have had on them.

The next morning Wellesley renewed his advice, announcing his intention at all events to withdraw Sherbrooke. Then at last, when the division which had saved him the day before began to retire, and when the French cavalry began to appear again, Cuesta yielded to the advice which he dared not any longer neglect, comforting himself for the wound to his pride by the absurd boast which he made to his staff, that "he had first "made the Englishman go down upon his knees." Now, however, he was not allowed to retreat without molestation; the French pursued vigorously, attacking our outposts so suddenly that they were thrown into momentary confusion: and Wellesley himself, who had ascended a neighbouring tower for the purpose of obtaining a more extended view of the enemy, narrowly escaped being taken. Our men, however, quickly recovered from their surprise, and repulsed their assailants. Not so did the Spaniards: after a few minutes the whole body which was exposed to the attack, consisting of 10,000 infantry, fled in complete disorder, as did all their artillerymen; and had not Wellesley himself brought up some British squadrons to check their pursuers the speed of their flight would not have saved the bulk of them from slaughter or capture; while, as it was, the absence of their guns, which had been thus

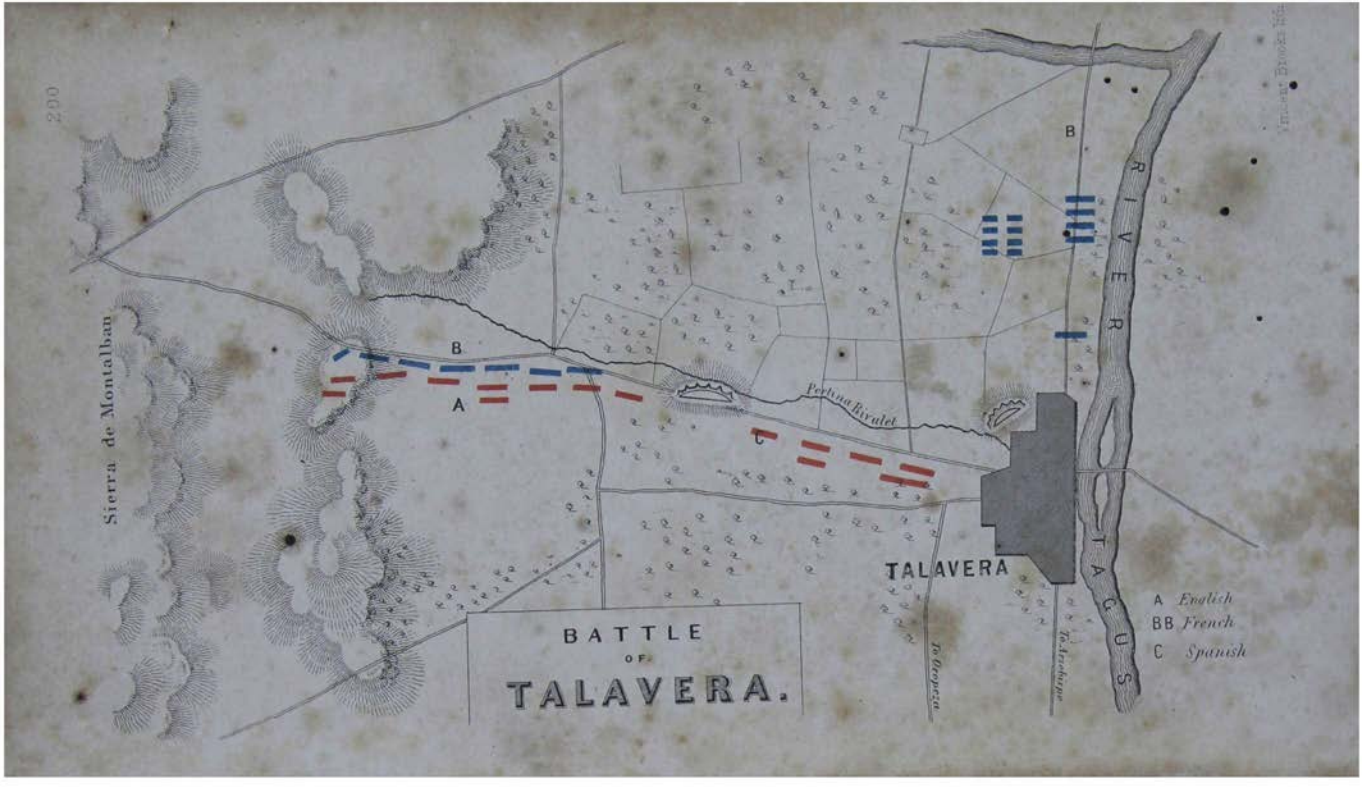
deserted, was severely felt in the ensuing battle. Presently Cuesta himself rallied a portion of the fugitives, and continued his retreat in tolerable order to the position which his more skilful colleague had marked out for him.

The town of Talavera lies on the north bank of the Tagus, and on its eastern side, where the battle was about to take place, is a narrow plain, somewhat less than three miles wide, between the river and a ridge of steep hills. Across this valley; Wellesley, to whom Cuesta now tacitly left all the arrangements for the battle, took up his position to await the coming attack. On the side nearest the river he placed the Spaniards, their front being protected by some olive-grounds, ditches, and mud walls, and their left being supported by a redoubt which the British engineer had just constructed on a small spot of rising ground. The British army was arranged on the other side of this redoubt, and with some of its divisions in one line, and some in two, covered the remainder of the ground, occupying with its extreme left a height which commanded the whole of the position. The whole line extended about two miles, and it was now held by about 34,000 Spaniards, and 19,000 British and Germans.

The British troops had scarcely taken possession of their ground when the height was fiercely assailed by Victor. General Hill, who commanded at that point, was wounded, but not disabled, and repelled them with considerable loss; and thus, on the night of the 27th, both armies rested in front of one another in eager expectation of the morrow.

Had Joseph taken Jourdain's advice, that morrow would have been more peaceful than the past day, for the experienced marshal counselled a retreat beyond the

Alberche, to give time for Soult, who was advancing rapidly from Salamanca, to reach the British rear, when Wellesley must, as he contended, be wholly unable to make head against their combined force. But fortunately, the King was anxious for the safety of Madrid, which Venegas was threatening, and trusted the assurances of Victor, who promised him certain success in an immediate battle. Again, at daybreak on the 28th, he assaulted Hill's position, and again he was repelled: and for some hours both armies rested from their fatigues. The means of refreshment however at the command of the several armies were widely different. The French, amply supplied, invigorated themselves for the coming struggle by a hearty meal; those of the Spaniards whose appetites were not spoiled by alarm were equally well provided; the British soldiers, whose regular allowance had altogether failed for some days past, had now no food but a few ounces of unground wheat; but their spirits, rising at the prospect of the coming contest, supplied the want of food to their bodies, and with a confidence in their leader which was amply justified by the event, they awaited the signal of battle. He, on his part, was as calm and confident as they. He had taken care that the brunt of the action should be borne by them; he had trusted very little to the Spaniards, whose position, having now proved their inefficiency, he had taken care should be almost unassailable, and he was not even disturbed when the Duque d'Albuquerque, who commanded one of the Spanish divisions, exasperated by some misunderstanding with Cuesta, sent him word that that general was betraying him. "Very well, sir, you may return to your "duty," was the sole reply vouchsafed to the officer who brought the information; and the officer who had con-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TALAVERA.

veyed it, marvelling at the British leader's imperturbable equanimity, rightly saw in it a sure omen of victory.

It was past two o'clock when the French columns dashed forward to the attack, the whole of their batteries heralding their advance with a ceaseless storm of cannon-balls. The division first exposed to their fury was that of Campbell on the right, who was supported by two Spanish battalions, and who, receiving in line the charge made, as was usual with the French, in column, overlapped it with a deadly fire, and after a brief struggle, drove them back in confusion with the loss of ten guns which had accompanied their advance. So far all was well; but in the other parts of the field things for a time wore a worse appearance. Another division proceeding against our left was encountered by Anson's brigade of cavalry, and was also driven back, till our horsemen, pursuing it with too great eagerness, came upon an unseen ravine. One regiment of German hussars halted at the sight; but the 23rd dragoons, under Colonel Seymour, rode madly down the steep, losing numbers of their men through the mere impracticability of the ground. The remainder pushed gallantly onwards to assail a brigade of hostile cavalry which they saw beyond; but before they could reach it Victor had despatched two regiments to its support, and the disaster of Balaklava which lately wrung every heart in Britain, had its type at Talavera. The dauntless gallantry of the soldiers could not compensate for the unskilful rashness of their officers, and, outnumbered and overpowered, they were at last driven back with the loss of more than half their numbers.

The Guards were equally inconsiderate: they also sternly repulsed the column which Lapisse led against them, beating it back with heavy slaughter, and mortally

wounding its leader: but they also, instead of remaining steadfast in their position, rushed forward in pursuit, and thus exposed their flank to the French cavalry, which charged them intrepidly, and to the batteries, which played on them with fearful effect. It was a perilous and critical moment; it might have been a fatal one had not Wellesley, who all day had been wherever the danger was most imminent, seen their advance, and at once anticipating its consequences, brought up the 48th regiment to support them: behind its unshaken ranks the Guards rallied, and the enemy again began to waver. Without giving them a moment's respite, Wellesley brought up the light cavalry to increase their confusion, and the battle was gained. Had he been able to make the slightest use of the main body of the Spaniards, his opinion was that the French would have been wholly destroyed; but as it was, the result of the day was sufficiently satisfactory. The British and German troops had not amounted to one-half of the number of the French who had assailed them, yet they had repulsed them with a loss in the two days of 9,000 men; had taken 20 of their guns, and some hundreds of prisoners. Our own loss had likewise been heavy: above 6,000 men were killed or wounded, and among the former was General Mackenzie, who in the operations preceding the battle, had given proof of very high courage and ability. Fortunately, Wellesley himself was unhurt; but his escape had been almost miraculous. A cannon-ball cut off a bough from a tree close to his head, two bullets passed through his clothes, and one spent ball struck him in the shoulder.

The moral effect of the battle was very great. The victory at Vimiero had been won by superior numbers; that of Corunna, though in reality a most glorious

triumph, yet, being followed by the withdrawal of the conquering army, bore to careless or unfriendly observers many of the features of a defeat. But Talavera had no such drawbacks; and according to the testimony of General Jomini, no partial witness, it "at once restored "the reputation of the British army, which during a "century had declined; and proved that the British "infantry could dispute the palm with the best in "Europe;" while the loss which Wellesley had sustained was in a great measure made up by an important reinforcement which he received the very next day: for General Robert Craufurd also was conducting to him three regiments—the 43rd, the 52nd, and the 95th—which subsequently earned conspicuous renown as the light division of the army, having while near Plasencia heard rumours which had been spread by some runaway Spaniards of a bloody battle and of severe disasters to our army, hastened with all speed to join his commander, and never halted till, having marched sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours, he on the morning of the 29th reached the field of battle, where his arrival was not welcomed the less warmly for being less needed than false reports had led him to apprehend.

But neither did the victory, splendid and important though it was, nor this seasonable reinforcement put an end to the difficulties with which Wellesley was beset. On the contrary, every succeeding day added to them, by proving to him the utter impossibility of trusting his Spanish allies in any way whatever. Their want of courage and discipline was not indeed universal. Many of their regiments, it is true, had run away, as he said, who "were neither attacked nor threatened with "attack, but who were only frightened by the noise of "their own fire." But others had behaved well, and had

been very useful; and the Duque de Albuquerque, one of their generals, had shown not only spirit, but willingness and docility, and had received ample praise from the British general. But their want of truth, whether in their promises for the future, or in their reports of the past, was absolute and invariable; in some cases they even defended it, telling him that to exaggerate their own force, and to understate that of the French was a national custom.*

Worse if possible even than their falsehood was the bad feeling towards us evinced on all occasions by all classes, and that not merely by passive indifference to our wants, but often by active injury. Wellesley could not only allege with truth that "we wanted everything, and "could get nothing; but that we were not even treated "as friends." The common soldiers who ran away at Talavera occupied themselves during the battle in plundering the baggage of the very men who were fighting in their defence; while the authorities not only took no steps to provide him with those supplies which could only be procured in the country, and which they had engaged to furnish; not only refused him the use of mules to draw his artillery, though they had plenty at hand idle, and though his want of them was only caused by his own having been killed in the battle; not only neglected to furnish him with necessaries for his wounded and invalids for which he offered to pay, but actually, in many instances, seized the magazines and

* A custom of long duration it certainly was; for our William III. had experienced it above a century before. He, too, had found, while warring in concert with them, that "they pretended that they had thousands of troops "when they had scarcely hundreds: so that for some campaigns all was lost "merely because they deceived him; till at last he believed nothing that "they said, but sent his own officers to examine everything."—*Burnet's 'Own Times,'* ii. 7, *quoted by Southey.*

appropriated the stores which he had provided for himself; while the Spanish cavalry, improving upon the example of their superiors, not content with intercepting the provisions intended for our army, fired upon our foraging parties, as if they had been enemies.

And yet while our soldiers were thus treated, Cuesta had the effrontery to complain of their having in some instances compelled the villagers to give them food, and to say falsely that they had so much bread that they had sold it to the soldiers of his army. Wellesley indignantly replied that they could not sell what they had not got; and that so far were the Spanish soldiers from wanting to buy bread, that he had himself, within three days, seen nearly 1,000 mules laden with provisions pass to the Spanish camp, which he had ordered his army, starving as it was, to allow to proceed without molestation.

The consequence of this conduct on the part of the Spaniards was that, by the middle of August, Wellesley found his men daily falling sick, his horses dying by hundreds, and the spirit and discipline, and consequently the efficiency of the whole army so greatly impaired that it was no longer equal to long or rapid marches, and that he was forced to declare that with the very same men "who a fortnight before had beaten double "their numbers, he should now hesitate to meet a "French corps of half their strength."

It was far from counterbalancing in his eyes the sufferings of his soldiers, that the Spanish Junta, as a token of their gratitude for his victory, appointed him a captain-general in their army, and presented him in the King's name with some horses; though it enabled him to show his disinterestedness, since, while he accepted the horses and the rank thus offered to him, he declined the pay attached to it.

He was preparing to follow up his victory by advancing upon Madrid, when he heard, to his dismay, that on Soult appearing in the neighbourhood of Baños, the Spaniards had abandoned that important pass without a struggle, and by so doing had endangered all his communications with Portugal. This intelligence deranged all his plans, though he had no idea of the strength of Soult's force, which he now estimated at 20,000 men, but which in reality exceeded 50,000. Cuesta proposed to him to send half of the allied army to check Soult; but he, refusing to divide his force, at once turned back with the whole, which however did not exceed 17,000 men, intending to unite with a Spanish division of 6,000, under General Bassecourt, which had behaved well at Talavera, and which had been sent towards Baños the day before; by the aid of which he expected to be fully equal to the French marshal. But on the evening of the 3rd of August, having reached Oropesa, a place nearly half-way between Talavera and Plasencia, he received information that Soult's force was far stronger than he had believed it to be, and also that its advanced guard had reached Naval Moral, a village about half-way between Almaraz and Arzobispo, the only two places where there were bridges over the Tagus between Talavera and Plasencia. He also heard, at the same time, that Cuesta, who had likewise received more correct intelligence than before of Soult's real strength, had, in spite of a solemn promise, abandoned the British hospitals at Talavera which Wellesley had committed to his care, and was hastening to unite his army once more to the British force, with the intention of fighting a battle at Oropesa.

Besides his concern for his wounded men who had thus become prisoners, Wellesley felt their abandonment

as a severe disgrace. The sufferings of the prisoners themselves he endeavoured to alleviate by writing energetic letters in their behalf to the French general, urging upon him forcibly, not only that it was the duty of them both to show humanity to all who should be thus unfortunate, but that he had an especial claim to the consideration of the French for the wounded prisoners belonging to his army, since he had treated those of the French who had fallen into his hands with invariable humanity and liberality. To the honour of the French marshals, it must be stated that they showed themselves in no respect backward in admitting the force of this appeal, but generally throughout the war treated their British prisoners with admirable kindness.

Cuesta's abandonment of Talavera, however, by inviting the pursuit of Victor, had made it impossible for the British army longer to remain on the northern side of the Tagus, and in spite of his remonstrances, Wellesley put his army in motion at daybreak on the 4th, and in the afternoon of that day crossed the river at the bridge of Arzobispo; at the same time sending Craufurd with his brigade to endeavour to gain possession of the bridge of Almaraz, an object in which that indefatigable officer succeeded.

The next day Cuesta, who at first had expressed his resolution to remain where he was, also crossed the river: and Wellesley moved further on to the south-west, leaving to him the charge of guarding the bridge, and establishing his own head-quarters at Deleytosa, in order to be able to defend the passage of Almaraz and the lower parts of the Tagus, or to return with ease to the defence of Portugal in the event of one of the French divisions again invading that country. But he soon found out that even the most defensible posts

were too weak to be maintained by such a warrior as Cuesta. In the middle of the day the French surprised the troops guarding the bridge of Arzobispo, forced the passage of the river, and took most of the Spanish guns; Bassecourt's division, which had behaved well at Talavera, being now the first to set the example of disorderly flight; and Wellesley expecting the enemy to push their advantage further, moved to Jaraicejo, and prepared to return to the Portuguese frontier, being, indeed, determined to do so, whether the Spaniards held their new position or not, if they continued to refuse him the necessary supplies.

He attributed so much of his difficulties to the impracticable temper and disposition of Cuesta himself, that he could hardly have been greatly grieved when, in the middle of August, that officer was seized with an illness which made him resign his command to General Eguia; but he soon found that what he had taken for the character of the man was in fact the character of his nation: that Eguia was not more inclined to co-operate with him, or to aid him in procuring necessaries than Cuesta had been, while his demeanour was so uncourteous that he ventured to impute insincerity and falsehood to Wellesley, who, unused to such an insult, thought it due to himself to decline all further correspondence with him.

He remained ten days at Jaraicejo, during which time the French divisions again separated so widely that he gave notice to the Spanish authorities to whom the duty of supplying him belonged, that if his men had sufficient food, and if he were provided with sufficient means of transport for his supplies, ammunition, and artillery, he could probably strike a blow against the enemy with advantage; but as this prospect failed to have the least

influence on his allies, he, on the 20th of August, broke up his camp, and retired towards the frontier of Portugal. So great had been the mortality which scanty and unwholesome food had produced among his beasts of burden, that he was compelled, for the sake of the conveyance of his wounded men, to leave the greater part of his ammunition and stores behind him; upon which the Spaniards, who had refused him the means of moving it, eagerly stooped, triumphing in gaining those spoils from their ally and champion which they had not the courage to win from the enemy.

In spite of all their arrogance and boastfulness, the Spaniards were dismayed at his determination to leave them to defend themselves, and tried every means to induce him to alter it. They endeavoured to shame him from it by imputing it to personal motives, though it was beyond their ability to name them; they endeavoured to allure him from it by offering to strengthen his army with 12,000 of their own troops under the Duque de Albuquerque, who should be wholly under his orders, if he would only march against the French, who, they assured him, were disheartened at the results of the campaign, and ready, if pressed, to withdraw across the Pyrenees. Finally, they induced Lord Wellesley to submit to him a proposal that he should remain behind the Guadiana, so as to cover Andalusia. But the resolution of the General (Wellington, as we shall call him for the future, since for his victory at Talavera he had been raised to the peerage as Viscount Wellington of Talavera and Baron Douro) had been adopted on too solid grounds to be shaken by any sneers or promises or arguments of the Spaniards. It had been caused by their actions, and was not to be altered by their words.

He was fully aware that, to use his own expression, "in a war such as that which was then being "carried on in Spain, it was necessary perhaps to "attend a little to popular opinion and prejudice, and "with this view to undertake operations at times not "exactly dictated by views of military expediency or "prudence."* But it was with no faltering or uncertain voice that prudence now peremptorily enjoined the course on which he had determined.

In proposing to him to remain in Andalusia, Lord Wellesley had been influenced by political views alone; and Wellington replied to his suggestions in an elaborate despatch, fully explaining the reasons why, on every consideration, whether of the objects proposed, of the means by which they were to be accomplished, or of the risks which must be encountered in the attempt to accomplish them, he had decided on avoiding all further co-operation with the Spanish armies. He explained to his brother that, since the most formidable division of the French army had quitted the neighbourhood of the Tagus, and since the Spanish forces were occupying a very strong position between that river and the Guadiana, they were quite adequate to the defence of that district against any force likely at the moment to be brought against them, if at least they were adequate to the defence of anything whatever; while if he were to continue to combine his operations with theirs, and if in consequence Soult should return and repeat the movements of the recent campaign, he himself should be again exposed to the risk of having his communication with Portugal cut off, and his whole army would be endangered, unless he could depend on the Spaniards

* Letter to the Marquess of Buckingham.—'Courts and Cabinets of George III.,' vol. iv., p. 388.

guarding the mountain passes better than they had hitherto done; but the "constant and shameful misbe-"haviour of the Spanish troops" forbade him to place any reliance on them. Nor, though fully aware of the advantage of having the people on his side, was he inclined to confide in the guerrillas, who had lately begun to form in bands, for any important operations; and therefore he was resolved wholly to separate his future operations from those of the Spaniards. At the same time, he did not contemplate an immediate withdrawal from Spain, but only a movement towards the Portuguese borders for the purpose of procuring food for and giving rest to his troops; and he considered that, even if he retired within the fortress of Portugal, his position would still deter the French from crossing the Guadiana with any moderately powerful army. Accordingly, he proceeded to Badajoz, a town of great strength on that river, just within the Spanish territory, which hereafter was destined to be the scene of one of his most brilliant exploits, and there the army remained in tranquillity till the end of the year. It had earned a rest; for seldom had an army produced such great effects in so short a period. It was little more than three months after Wellington's landing at Lisbon that he crossed the Tagus at Arzobispo. Within that time he had wholly delivered Portugal from the invader. By his advance towards Madrid he had compelled the French to give up their hold on the important province of Galicia; he had baffled some of their most renowned marshals, and had given two of them a decisive defeat; and he had done all this with an army never exceeding 30,000 men—usually falling far short of it; and which was therefore, as was inevitable, greatly exhausted by its laborious and incessant exertions.

CHAPTER XIII.

Wellington delivers his opinion of the war to the Ministers—Is greatly harassed by the Spanish generals—Plans the Lines of Torres Vedras—Is attacked by the Opposition in Parliament—Napoleon reinforces his army in Spain—The Spaniards are defeated at Oçana and Alba de Tormes—Wellington re-enters Portugal—His confidence in his eventual success.

THIS period, however, of military inaction brought but little rest to himself. The Ministry at home, being weak and far from united in feelings and opinions, were hesitating as to the expediency of continuing the contest. They had thrown upon him the responsibility of entering Spain at all, and now, dismayed by Napoleon's defeat of the Austrians at Wagram, they consulted him on the probability of ultimate success in a way that showed no such confidence in it on their part as to make them unwilling to abandon the struggle altogether.

In a series of despatches to Lord Castlereagh, and after his resignation of office, to his successor, Lord Liverpool, and also to his own brother, Lord Wellesley, he delivered his opinion on the question thus submitted to him, unfolding views of which subsequent experience amply proved the soundness and accuracy.

He anticipated that the French army in the Peninsula, from which Napoleon had drawn very large detachments

for his German campaign, would, on the renewal of peace between France and Austria, be reinforced to such an extent as to replace it on nearly its former footing: and that its first object would be to crush the British force, so as "to revenge upon it the different blows "which it had given them." Nevertheless, if the Portuguese army were brought to a state of efficiency, he did not doubt that, even if the French should succeed in obtaining absolute possession of Spain, he should still be able to defend Portugal; and though the fact of that country having been at peace for nearly half a century had greatly impaired the military spirit and habits of the people, they already, under Beresford's training, showed themselves so superior to the Spaniards that he had good hopes of them. But Portugal, never in itself a rich country, was now, in consequence of the exactions of its French invaders, and of the emigration of its royal family to Brazil, so sadly impoverished as to be wholly unable to bear the expense of maintaining such a force as would be required; nor could a Portuguese army, even if brought up to its greatest possible strength, successfully resist a French invasion unless it were supported by a sufficient body of British soldiers. He therefore advised the ministers to give Portugal liberal pecuniary assistance, and to raise his army to the number of 30,000 effective soldiers, the expense of whom he promised to keep as low as possible, and whom, he had no doubt whatever, in case of unexpected disaster, he should be able to bring away in safety.

It was not, as his enemies would have had it believed, any personal ambition that impelled him to give this advice. He was well aware that very different from a bed of roses would be his position as commander "in "a contest which must necessarily be defensive on our

" part, in which there might be no brilliant events, in " which he might fail, and in which he was sure to be the " mark for much abuse and misrepresentation, and even " ran the risk of losing what reputation he had gained; " but he felt that he should not act fairly by the Govern- " ment if he did not tell them his real opinion, which " was that they would betray the honour and interest of " the country if they did not continue their efforts in " the Peninsula, which, in spite of all the disasters that " had befallen the Spaniards, was by no means hopeless."

With the Spaniards he recommended them to have nothing to do in the existing state of affairs. Even if, as Lord Castlereagh had been led to expect, the Spanish Government should be willing to give the command of their armies to a British commander-in-chief, he himself should be very unwilling to accept such a charge; nor, even if the British force under his command were to be increased to a much greater extent than he had proposed, did he think that he should be able so to combine operations with the Spanish armies as to do the French any very material injury, or effectually to protect the south of Spain without uncovering Portugal, and Portugal he had always looked upon as the proper base for his operations. He did not, indeed, doubt that if, in order to procure our co-operation, the Spanish Government should put Cadiz into our hands, our retreat from Spain would be as secure as from Portugal; but success in offensive operations to be undertaken in concert with the Spaniards against the French, even if the latter should not be reinforced from Germany, he pronounced could not be expected. The common people in Spain were sufficiently friendly to him and to his army: those who showed jealousy of him and it were the higher authorities; exactly those who, being more aware of the services

which he had rendered them, ought to have been more grateful. He had not been long at Badajoz when he had a singular proof of the impracticable feeling of all the Spanish generals in the conduct of Bassecourt, who actually arrested a French officer sent by Marshal Mortier with a letter to Wellington, and who persisted in detaining him above two months as a prisoner in spite of the British general's indignant remonstrances. The priests too complained of his prohibition of their interference with the soldiers of his army. He had so far relaxed the strict provisions of the law as to permit his Roman Catholic soldiers to attend mass if they chose to do so of their own accord; but he would not allow the Spanish priests to abuse the mild and tolerant spirit which had led him to grant this indulgence in order to acquire for themselves an influence over his soldiers of their persuasion, who though they might perhaps have looked upon a prohibition to attend divine service according to the Roman Catholic form as a grievance, showed no particular eagerness to do so when they found there was no objection made to their attendance. No part, however, of the vexations which he suffered from the Spaniards annoyed him so much as the difficulties which their Government and generals threw in the way of his procuring the exchange of those of his men who had become prisoners to the French. Most of them had been wounded at Talavera, and had only fallen into the hands of the enemy in consequence of the scandalous misconduct of Cuesta, while those of the French who had been taken in that battle had been given up to the Spanish general, since he himself who had taken them had no place in which to detain them. Soult was as desirous to exchange prisoners as Wellington; but when he proposed such a measure, the Spaniards refused their

consent, and even when Wellington obtained from the Portuguese the liberation of a French officer whom they had taken, and for whom Kellermann was willing to give an Englishman of equal rank, the Spanish Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo stopped the Frenchman and a British officer in the Portuguese service who was escorting him to the French camp, insulted them both, and sent them back into Portugal. Boiling with indignation at the feeling thus evinced by the Spaniards towards "British "officers and soldiers, who were made prisoners only "because they were wounded in fighting the battles of "Spain," Wellington made a formal report of their conduct in this matter to his own Government, and in the mean time sought to alleviate the hard fortune of the prisoners by writing on their behalf to Kellermann, requesting him to give them their liberty on parole, and telling him also that it was politic to do so, as he might "be assured that the honour of a British officer was a "better security than all the guards and sentinels in the "world," and that, if any one belonging to his army should violate it, and dare to approach him, he would at once send him back again.

His army, though neither are the banks of the Guadiana a healthy situation, nor is autumn a healthy season in that country, was gradually recovering its health and vigour at Badajoz, and its strength was also increased by some important reinforcements. With a sufficiency of supplies, discipline and order likewise returned, though the ideas which the common soldiers entertained of the licence allowable in war were not yet eradicated, and the rigid moderation and honesty which he ultimately succeeded in establishing were as yet far from being observed. His task in this respect was, as he complained, rendered harder than it should have

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been by the unwillingness of the natives if injured to appear as prosecutors; and what was worse, by the indifference of our own soldiers and officers to the obligations of an oath, whether as witnesses or judges in court-martial.

For the moment he was safe in his present advanced position, but he was already looking forward to the end of some future campaign, when he might have need of very different means of defence to enable him to resist the overwhelming masses which he had already predicted that Napoleon would hurl against him; and with this view he went in the autumn to Lisbon, where, after a careful examination of the ground, he planned and gave directions for the immediate commencement of those celebrated fortifications known as the Lines of Torres Vedras. From Lisbon he repaired to Seville, to explain more fully than he could do by letter the whole of his views for the future prosecution of the war to his brother the Marquess, who, in consequence of changes which had recently taken place in the Ministry at home, was on the point of returning to England to become the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the place of Mr. Canning: Lord Liverpool at the same time becoming Secretary for War and the Colonies, in the room of Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Perceval succeeding the Duke of Portland as Prime Minister. The Marquess had, while Governor-General in India, displayed a great genius for warlike combinations, and it was of great importance to Wellington to have in the Government so firm a friend, able to appreciate the vastness of his plans, and eager from natural affection, as well as from admiration of his genius, to uphold him in their execution. It was probably owing greatly to Lord Wellesley's influence in the new Cabinet that Welling-

ton's views were adopted, and that the pecuniary aid which he pointed out as indispensable to Portugal, and the reinforcements which he required for himself, were liberally granted, though not without great misgivings on the part of the Government, nor without many an intimation that it was on him that the responsibility of the continuance of the struggle must rest. Not the least admirable part of Wellington's character is the invincible moral intrepidity with which, under such discouraging circumstances, he girded himself up for the gigantic task which he had voluntarily undertaken. Sanguine indeed of ultimate success, yet seeing well that that success could not be attained without much danger and suffering: foreseeing with equal clearness that a very slight disaster would cause the Government at home to abandon the struggle, and that, if it should be so abandoned, the whole blame of the failure would be thrown upon himself, and praying that "if he did fail, "God might have mercy on him, for surely no one "else would."

He had soon abundant reason to strengthen him in that opinion, in the unparalleled acrimony with which the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament assailed even his glorious operations of the past campaign. It may be that Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, the leaders of that party, who, when the Duke of Portland's ministry was broken up by the unfortunate quarrel between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, had indulged the hope of succeeding to power, had their judgment in some degree clouded and embittered by their disappointment. It is quite certain that no men ever carried political rancour further than they did on this occasion, or exhibited it in a way more calculated to do lasting discredit to their characters for moderation or

sagacity. The chief object of their attacks was the General himself.* Lord Grey, whose experience of war was probably confined to the Northumberland militia, "saw much to blame in his conduct in a military point "of view;" condemned him "for not sufficiently securing "his left;" sneered at him as one who, "after advancing "into a country, fighting a battle, and claiming a "victory, was in two days obliged to retreat, and to leave "his sick and wounded in the hands of the enemy," thus laying upon him the blame of Cuesta's misconduct; imputed to him as a further fault that "the despatch of "the Spanish generals gave a very different account of "the behaviour of their troops from that which was "contained in his letters to the Government," and finally pronounced that he could not "discover any "circumstance connected with the battle of Talavera, or "its results, which could entitle it to be called a victory." Some drew a comparison to his disadvantage between him and Sir John Moore; others, in a similar spirit, compared Talavera to Maida. Mr. Ponsonby condemned "his rashness and presumption in risking an unnecessary "battle for which there was not even one good cause," while the aged admiral, Earl St. Vincent, whose own glorious deeds might have led him to a more candid appreciation of similar actions when performed by others, agreed with Lord Grey in denying that Talavera had been a victory at all. Some objected to the peerage which had been conferred on Wellington; some to the grant of an annuity of 2,000*l.* a year with which the ministers proposed to accompany it; and Lord Milton, going beyond all preceding speakers in either House, inveighed against his ambition, declared that he had fought merely to gain a peerage, and, as the best way of

* Hansard's 'Parliamentary Debates,' January and February, 1810.

depriving him of the distinction which appeared to be his sole object, moved to leave his name out of the vote of thanks which he was willing to admit was deserved by the rest of his army; while Lord Grenville, even when not carried away by the heat of debate, but writing calmly to his brother, and professing himself a friend of Wellington, pronounced him to have been "very rash," and "to have given no very favourable specimen of his "talents, excepting on the field of battle." * Equally unanimous were the whole party in their denunciations of the folly of continuing, or of anticipating any possible good from prolonging the war in the Peninsula. The only exception to this discreditable show of party feeling was furnished by Lord Lansdowne, who, though then a very young man, refused to follow the lead of his political chiefs on this occasion, giving early evidence of the candour and fairness to a political adversary of which he still reaps the fruit in the general esteem and respect with which he is regarded in the Senate, whose deliberations he is still spared to partake and to influence, and who, in a subsequent debate, while condemning many parts of the policy of the ministers, still feeling a just pride in the bravery and triumph of his countrymen, avowed that he should "ever contemplate the battle of "Talavera as a proud monument of glory to the general "who commanded and to the army who won that ever "memorable day." It may well be supposed, however conscious he might feel of the wisdom of his past conduct, of the great benefits which had ensued from it to the cause of which he was the champion, and of the soundness of his calculations for the future, that the tone thus adopted towards him by his political adversaries at home was most painful to the British General, though he

* 'Courts and Cabinets,' iv., 354.

declared that the only thing in the debates that had taken place that gave him any concern was the evidence that they afforded of the existence of such a vehement party spirit as could blind men of such generally high character to the unfairness of thus attacking an officer in absence. But there was one to whom it gave unmixed pleasure, and who drew from it confident auguries of his own eventual success. Napoleon forwarded to the Emperor of Russia the English newspapers containing an account of the debates in which these speeches were delivered, triumphed in the disunion in Parliament, and enlarged on the "extreme imprudence" of Wellington, who "had committed himself in the heart of Spain with "30,000 men, having on his flanks three armies consist-"ing of ninety-one battalions,* and from forty to fifty "squadrons, while he had in his front the army com-"manded by the King, which was of equal force. It was "difficult," he declared, "to conceive such an act of "presumption."† The French emperor, one of whose worst weaknesses was the habit of always depreciating the merits of his adversaries, omitted to explain to his correspondent how it was that his own marshals, having such fearful odds in their favour, had reaped nothing but discomfiture from the contest with so presumptuous and imprudent an antagonist; but the evidence thus afforded him of the rancour of the British Opposition and of the weakness of the Ministry contributed to encourage him to reinforce his army in the Peninsula on a more gigantic scale than ever, feeling assured that the first serious disaster which he could inflict on the General

* A battalion, in the French armies, is about 700 infantry—a squadron about 300 cavalry.

† See a letter of Napoleon's quoted in Pearce's 'Life of Lord Wellesley,' iii., 86.

whom he affected to despise (though the greatness of his preparations somewhat belied his words) would certainly cause the withdrawal of the British army, and would thus leave both Spain and Portugal at his mercy.

The English newspapers, however, did the French emperor a greater service than by their reports of the debates, which only led him on thus to persevere with increased vigour in a struggle to which he himself at a subsequent period with justice imputed no small share in his ruin: for, before he quitted Badajoz, Wellington found it necessary to draw the attention of the ministers to the minute information given in the newspapers of the position and numbers of the British army in the Peninsula, and also of his own intended operations as revealed to his soldiers by the preparations made for them. He forbore to inquire how they had obtained this information; nor did he pronounce any opinion as to the practicability of preventing the publication of such intelligence; but he pointed out to Lord Liverpool that as there had already been instances of information having been thus conveyed by the daily journals to the enemy at the very moment when it was most important that he should not receive it, it "increased materially the "difficulty of all his operations;" and suggested that it might at least be intimated to the editors of the newspapers of which he complained, that, while they would probably not be desirous of giving incorrect intelligence to their English readers, exactly in proportion to the correctness of the information which they were able to acquire was the importance that it should be withheld. Of all the difficulties with which he had to contend this was the hardest to remove, proceeding as it did from the natural desire of officers to his army to give to their friends at home a correct apprehension of their situation

and prospects, and from the impossibility of checking the imprudence of the friends to whom this information was communicated, or the spirit of rivalry which existed between the different journals, each eager to outstrip its competitors as the earliest channels of intelligence so eagerly sought for by readers of all classes. The same practice was complained of by our generals and Government during the late war with Russia: though the greater distance of the scene of action naturally in some degree alleviated the mischief; which is one for which no remedy can be found except in the patriotic good sense of the possessors of such information, which may lead them to slight the credit, such as it is, to be derived from its possession, from a consideration of the absolute necessity of perfect secrecy to the even partial success of many military operations.

During this autumn, while Wellesley was thus recruiting his army, and reserving its strength for future operations, the affairs of the Spaniards were getting into a worse condition than ever. Admiral Martin wholly destroyed a French squadron which was conveying supplies to the army on the north-eastern coast; but that success could not save Gerona, which surrendered after a most gallant resistance, nor arrest the progress which Suchet and St. Cyr were making in the subjugation of Catalonia; while in the central and western provinces the Spanish generals sustained most destructive defeats.

While at Seville, Wellington had most earnestly pressed the Junta to adhere solely to defensive operations. And when the Duque del Parque, one of the Spanish generals, had requested the aid of the Portuguese army to enable him to act offensively against the French in Leon, Wellington advised the Portuguese Government to give

no assistance or sanction to such a project, the success of which he pronounced impossible, and the abandonment of which he strongly recommended to the Spaniard. Del Parque, however, was not to be influenced by advice, however solid might be the reasons on which it was founded: nor was the Junta, who in November permitted General Areizaga, at the head of their most numerous army, to march against Madrid, spreading a report, in the vain hope of encouraging their own soldiers and perplexing the French, that Wellesley had agreed to co-operate with him. Areizaga had above 50,000 men, and Soult had fewer than 30,000 when the two armies met at Oçana on the 19th of November: but again the difference of numbers in the armies was more than counterbalanced by the difference of skill in the commanders. The Spaniards were completely routed, leaving Soult their artillery, their military chest, their baggage, and stores of every kind, and a body of prisoners almost equal in number to the whole of his army. And this defeat brought a similar blow on Del Parque. A week earlier, having under him above 20,000 men, he had gained some advantage over a French division of 11,000 at Tamames, and this success, which Spanish arrogance easily magnified into a triumph, encouraged him to bolder operations, which led to his entire defeat by Kellermann at Alba de Tormes, just one week after the destruction of Areizaga's army at Oçana.

This last disaster, though Wellington had foreseen it as inevitable, compelled him to remove from his position at Badajoz. Soon after his arrival at that town, letters from Soult to King Joseph, which had been intercepted, had made him apprehend that that marshal had formed a design of attacking Ciudad Rodrigo, a very strong fortified town on the Agueda, only a few miles from the

Portuguese frontier. And Kellermann's victory now so greatly facilitated that project, that Wellington, being determined to make an endeavour to save a place of such great importance, though he had no very great hope of success, resolved to move the bulk of his army towards its neighbourhood, leaving one division under Hill at Abrantes on the Tagus, as a protection to Lisbon. He was influenced also in part by the necessity of avoiding entangling his army in the defence of Spanish Estramadura and Andalusia, which the battle of Oçana had left at the mercy of the enemy: though his indignation at the conduct of the Spanish generals and Government did not prevent his recommending the ministers at home still to give them support, by furnishing arms for any fresh armies which might be levied; since even the soldiers who had escaped from the field of battle had generally disabled themselves for future service by throwing away their weapons.

In spite of all the care which he had taken of the health of his troops, they had not wholly escaped the fevers and agues of which the marshes of the Guadiana are prolific; and he had so many in the hospitals, that it was with little more than 20,000 men that, in the last week of the year, he crossed the Tagus, re-entered Portugal, established his head-quarters at Viseu in Beira, and there awaited the disclosure of the French plans for the coming campaign.

It was in a noble spirit that he himself prepared for it. There would have been far less merit in surmounting his difficulties had they come upon him unexpectedly: it is in his clear perception of them all, and in his resolution to face them all with no motive to sustain him in the struggle but a sense of duty, that the real heroism of Wellington's character is most apparent. He knew

beforehand the scantiness of the resources, not only of our allies, but also of his own Government: the deplorable defects of the Commissariat department, on which the efficiency of the whole army depended; the difficulty which the Treasury found in supplying Portugal with the necessary pecuniary assistance, without which she must be impotent; the limitations which that want of money must necessarily impose on the reinforcements to be sent out to himself; while the additions likely to be made to the French would be as boundless as the power of their emperor was absolute. And he also knew, what was more vexatious still, the mistaken notion of his resources entertained at home, by the nation at large, and even by the Government. In spite of all his despatches, they persisted in believing that he had sufficient means at his command, and were prepared to impute to him the blame "of all failures, as well of supplies as of every-"thing else." And even before the debates in Parliament, which have already been mentioned, he foretold that if he should fail, his detractors would "not inquire "whether it were owing to his own incapacity, to the "blameless errors to which all men are liable, to the "faults or mistakes of others, to the deficiency of our "means, to the serious difficulties of our situation, or to "the great power and abilities of the enemy." But, in spite of all these considerations, he resolved, to use his own words, "not to give up the game as long as it "could be played;" and though he would gladly have had a larger army under his command, he forbore even to ask for it, lest he should seem to "endeavour to shift "from his own shoulders on those of the ministers the "responsibility of failure, by calling for means which "he knew they could not give:" and he adhered to his old opinion, that if the Portuguese did their own

duty to their country, he should still be able to save it.

Notwithstanding this expression of confidence, which was sincere, he did not omit taking steps to obviate some of the worst disasters of failure, and embarked the greater portion of the baggage of the army on board the transports in the Tagus; choosing for this operation the time of the arrival of fresh reinforcements from England, in order to avoid alarming the minds of the natives, by giving them an idea that he was preparing to abandon them: and believing that if we should be compelled to evacuate the country, the greater part of the Portuguese army would likewise be desirous of quitting it, he recommended our Government to be prepared to transport them to the Portuguese colonies in South America, where, in a country far from the dangers of French aggression, they might still be of service to their expatriated sovereign.

Napoleon, as Wellington had expected, availed himself of the conclusion of peace with Austria to send into the Peninsula reinforcements amounting to 150,000 fresh troops, which, in the course of the spring of 1810, raised the total number of his army employed in that country to the enormous amount of 380,000 men. He reorganized the whole, dividing Spain into several military governments, as he termed them, to the retention or reduction of each of which he allotted one division. The strongest division of all, consisting of nearly 100,000 veteran soldiers, he called the army of Portugal, and gave the command of it to Massena, Prince of Essling, the most experienced, and at that time the most renowned of all his marshals.* To oppose this host,

* Wellington himself always considered Massena the most formidable opponent whom he had ever encountered, except his imperial master. At

Wellington had about 25,000 regular troops of the Portuguese; 30,000 Portuguese militia; and, including invalids, 30,000 British soldiers, to whom he expected a reinforcement of 5,000 more. And this force he was compelled to weaken, inadequate as it was to the service required of it, since very little dependence could be placed on the militia, and even the regular Portuguese regiments were as yet imperfect and unequal in their discipline;—for the battle of Oçana had left the south of Spain almost defenceless: and at the beginning of the year the French had poured into the southern provinces; had given Areizaga a second defeat; had made themselves masters of Jaen, Granada, Cordova, and Seville, and had advanced to the immediate neighbourhood of Cadiz, where the citizens, in their alarm, elected a municipal junta, and acquiesced in the appointment of a regency, of which General Castaños was the most prominent member. The Duque de Albuquerque, who had been appointed president of the junta and commander-in-chief, posts which the jealousy of his colleagues soon compelled him to resign, applied himself at once to strengthening the fortifications, and accepted the offer of General Campbell (who had succeeded Sir John Cradock as Governor of Gibraltar) to aid the garrison with some British troops. One regiment was sent from Gibraltar; and Wellington, who, in spite of his deter-

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a large party shortly after the conclusion of the war, one of the guests inquired of him whom of all the French marshals he thought the most skilful general: Wellington, not inclined to give an opinion on such a subject in a mixed company, replied briefly and somewhat gruffly, "I am sure I "don't know." His questioner, who thought that his rank entitled him to be pertinacious, repeated his question more than once, to receive the same reply. He pressed it again; "Surely your Grace must have formed an "opinion on such a subject?" "I am sure I don't know," rejoined the Duke; "I only know this, I always found Massena where I did not want him."

mination to connect himself with Spanish operations as little as possible, considered the preservation of that city essential to the defence of the south of Portugal, and had had that object especially recommended to his attention in his original instructions, sent General William Stewart thither with nearly 4,000 British and Portuguese infantry and artillery. In March, General Graham arrived from England, and took the command of the British portion of the garrison; and though often harassed by the factions of the citizens, baffled by the vacillations of the authorities, and disgusted by the feebleness and timidity of both, maintained a gallant resistance to the besiegers for twelve months, when, by the victory of Barossa, he finally placed the city out of the reach of serious danger.

The scantiness of Wellington's force necessarily made him contemplate a purely defensive plan of operations as far as Portugal was concerned: though if events should permit more vigorous measures, he was prepared to assume the offensive, either for the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo, or for the sake of assisting the Spanish armies, by a strong diversion in Old Castile. With this view, he placed Craufurd with the light division in the immediate neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo, on the eastern side of the Coa, a river running near and parallel to the eastern frontier of Portugal, ordering him, however, at once to retire if the French should collect a large force in that quarter; for, if they were resolved on invading Portugal, he knew that he could not prevent them from doing so, since the frontiers of that country were defensible only in very few places. It was to means very different from fighting desperate battles against superior numbers that he trusted for the eventual deliverance of that kingdom. And bold as it was in a foreigner to

call on the natives to use such means, he did not scruple to do so, trusting to the ascendancy which his character and reputation had given him over the authorities, and to the popularity of himself and his countrymen among the natives in general, to induce them to submit to losses and privations which no nation in the modern history of Europe had ever before been called upon to inflict on themselves, though the success with which his conduct was attended excited the Russians two years later to follow the example now set by the Portuguese.

The rank of Marshal-General of Portugal, which had been conferred on him on his arrival in the preceding year, gave him absolute authority over the Portuguese troops of every kind, regular and irregular. And to make this authority sufficiently extensive and effectual, he called upon the Regency to revive and strictly to enforce the ancient military laws of the kingdom, by which all men capable of active service were liable to be called upon to bear arms in its defence. He further required that the inhabitants of any district that might be invaded by the French should at once destroy all the resources of that district, the crops, the mills, and the dwelling-houses, the bridges and the boats, so that the invaders should find themselves in a desert, and instead of being able to make war support war, should be forced to carry the whole of their supplies with them: while the entire population, having become soldiers, and being thus without other home than their camp, should hem them in on all sides.

At the same time, he pressed the ministers at home liberally to supply arms to the army which he was thus calling into existence; since, if that were done, he had no doubt that, besides the ordenanza, or armed peasantry, the country would furnish at least 90,000 regularly-

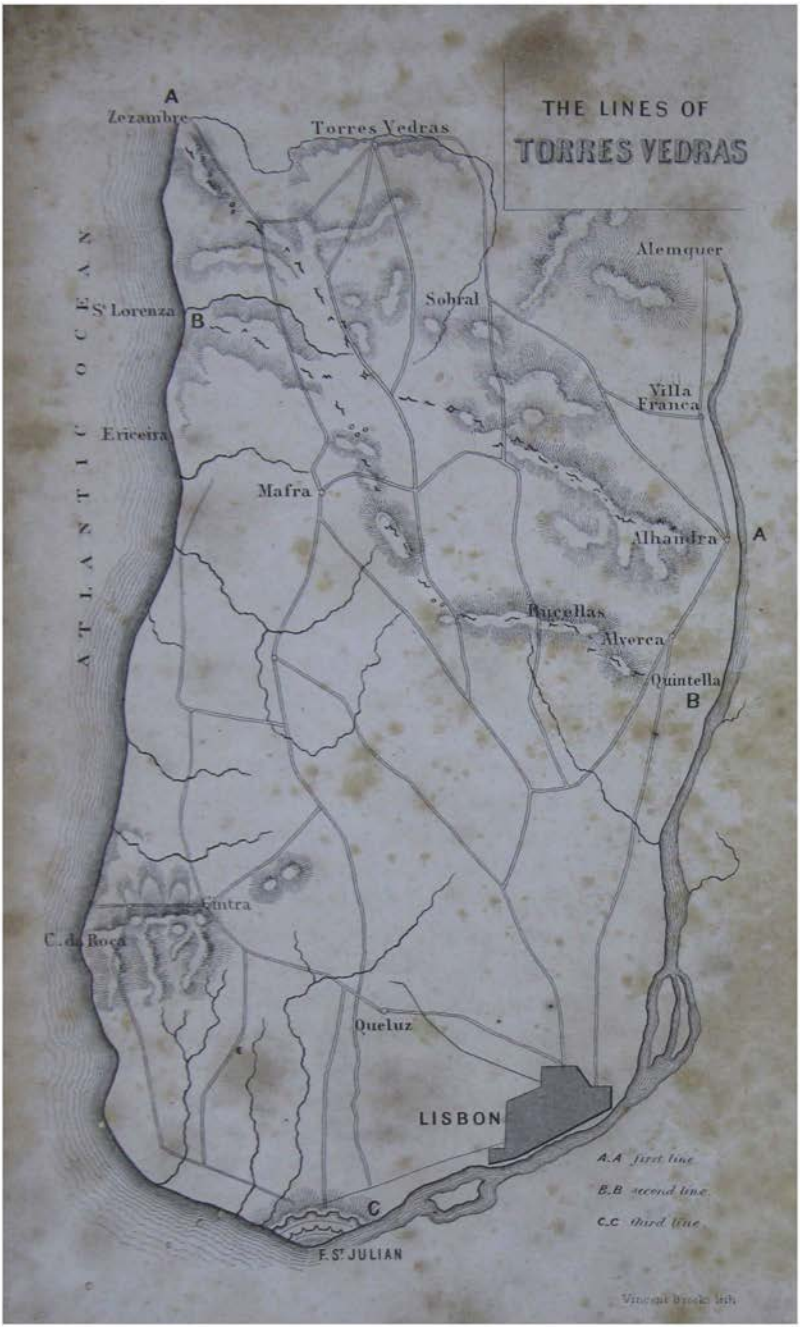
organized soldiers. He reported at the same time, that though still wanting military experience, and that complete confidence in themselves and in their officers which can only be produced by such experience, the Portuguese regiments already organized had greatly improved, and that their condition justified him in auguring well of the eventual efficiency of the force yet to be raised; while of their detestation of the French, of their loyalty to their own royal family, and of the confidence in the British felt by the population in general, there was no doubt.

Wellington's expectation, that the French would make an attempt upon Ciudad Rodrigo was soon verified: for in the middle of February, Ney marched against that town, while at the same time Mortier appeared in front of Badajoz, and summoned that fortress also to surrender. The fact of the French making this double attack caused Wellington to suspect that they would not be able to make a vigorous effort to support either: nevertheless he at once moved Hill towards the frontier, to support Badajoz; though before he could reach Portalegre, Mortier, finding the place stronger than he had expected, had again retired; and Ney also, after making a slight demonstration against Ciudad Rodrigo, again withdrew towards Salamanca, though he continued hovering about the place till June, when he besieged it in form.

In a short time all was quiet: Wellington judged that the French were too much divided to attempt any important operation, and was less solicitous about their army than about his own, in sending money to which the Government displayed a continual and most culpable neglect, keeping the pay of the troops constantly in arrear, and thus supplying, if not a justification, at least a cause for the habits of plunder and outrage to which

the men were yielding, thus sapping the very foundation of military discipline; while the Portuguese authorities were equally remiss in furnishing them with the necessary food; and even the highest of them were not remarkable for any strict adherence to truth in the statements which they made in excuse of this remissness. In part their neglect arose from the difference between their habits and ours, as the Portuguese of every class eat far less meat than we do: still Wellington could not allow the health of his troops to be sacrificed by an adoption of a foreign diet; and, being convinced that the country was fully able to supply what he demanded, and what it had undertaken to provide, he gave the Regency notice, that if it were not at once furnished, he would suspend his operations, and withdraw from his present position.

This period of comparative inaction he employed in pushing on the completion of the works at Torres Vedras, and ever mindful of the possibility of being compelled to evacuate the country, he proposed to strengthen the fortress of Peniche also, in order, even if forced to embark with the main body of the army, still to be able to keep that place as a base on which to support a continued resistance to the invaders till a more favourable opportunity should arise: for the Portuguese were more unanimous, and more firm in their determination to resist the French than the Spaniards were; still he foresaw (and his foresight on this point is the more remarkable, because it was shared with no one else) that though in a short time all Spain, except Cadiz and one or two other fortified places, would be in the hands of the French, yet even in that kingdom there would be no obedience to them, but a general disposition to revolt, which would ultimately be successful. And if all Portugal should be overrun in like manner, he considered


THE LINES OF
TORRES VEDRAS
A
Zezambre
Torres Vedras
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Alemquer
St Lorenza
B
Sobral
Villa Franca
Ericeira
Mafra
Alhandra
A
Parcellas
Alverca
Quintella
B
Cintra
C. da Roca
Queluz
LISBON
A.A first line
B.B second line
C.C third line
C
F. St JULIAN

that the preservation of Peniche would be as effectual in keeping alive the flame of resistance in the Portuguese as Cadiz would be in encouraging it in Spain. At the same time he pressed the ministers to send out a British fleet, to be stationed permanently at the mouth of the Tagus, partly in order to prevent the French from bringing thither a squadron from the Mediterranean, which would have had a most pernicious effect; and partly to give confidence to the Regency and citizens of Lisbon, who were somewhat dismayed at the prospect of the French approaching that city on the left bank of the Tagus, which he considered it out of his power to prevent, having resolved for the time to confine his own efforts to the preservation of the country to the north of that river. From Admiral Berkeley, commanding the fleet on the coast, he received the most cordial assistance, and the sailors even co-operated with the engineers in the construction of the lines of Torres Vedras.

The French were gradually making such advances in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo, that their outposts were almost in contact with those of Craufurd; and on one occasion, towards the end of March, they made an attack upon them, in which they were repulsed with some loss. They made other demonstrations, both in the north and the south, in the hope of inducing Wellington to divide his army; but he was not to be deceived into so false a step: he pronounced that they threatened on too many points at once to be dangerous on any one, and that they could do no possible mischief to his army or to any part of it.

The trouble given to him by his employers in England must, in spite of all his equanimity and confidence in his resources, have been far more trying. To the attacks that had been made upon him in Parliament by the

Opposition, he professed, and no doubt felt, the most complete indifference; and in some respects he considered the discussion which had taken place to have been advantageous to himself, by giving his friends the "opportunity of setting the public right upon some points on "which it had not been informed, and on others on which "misrepresentation had driven the truth from its memory." But the reiterated questions of the ministers as to his capability of maintaining himself in Portugal, and insuring the safety of his army, demanded more elaborate notice. They had become in some degree influenced by the imputations which Lord Grey and his followers had levelled at their general's rashness, as well as by the oft-repeated reference to Sir John Moore's declaration, that Portugal could not be successfully defended; and his own opinion was that their evident weakness portended a change in the Government, in which case the contest would have been at once abandoned: nevertheless, he once more entered into a minute exposition of his projects and expectations, not sorry perhaps for the opportunity of putting them on record in a form which should prevent either party from throwing the blame on him if the struggle should eventually be abandoned, and of administering an indirect reproof to the ministers for not giving sufficient confidence to their general, on whom they threw the whole responsibility. While doing every justice to Moore's great abilities, he pointed out that the events which had taken place since that general's death had made a great difference in the situation of Portugal, and also that Moore's opinion had been given without his having had any great opportunity of acquiring information about that country. His own opinion he avowed to be, that the French could not drive him out of Portugal except by bringing against him

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such a force as should compel them to abandon all other objects, and should even endanger the maintenance of their power in Spain; while if they approached his position with numbers not greatly superior to his own, he should fight them with every confidence, and even if defeated, he should still be able to retire from the country in safety. For that he was willing to be responsible. He reminded the ministers that they had no reason to suspect him of being desirous to fight unnecessary battles on disadvantageous terms; on the contrary, if he had consulted the wishes of his own army, and of the Portuguese troops, he might during the last six months have more than once attacked the enemy with the certainty of success; but as victory would have had no permanently beneficial effect, he "had looked solely to the great result "of our maintaining our position in the Peninsula," and had also abstained from lavishing the blood of his men, as well as from "harassing them by marches and coun-"ter-marches, in conformity to the movements of the "enemy;" and he felt that he already had his reward for this forbearance in the daily-increasing efficiency of his army. At the same time, he assured the ministers, that if they disapproved of his past conduct and of his plans for the future, and consequently gave him instructions conceived in a different spirit, he would strictly obey them. In that case, the responsibility would be theirs: at present it rested on him; and all he asked was, that if it was to continue to do so, he might "be left to the "exercise of his own judgment, and be supported by the "fair confidence of the Government in the measures "which he should adopt."

At the same time, so acute was his penetration, and so accurate his foresight on every point connected with the duration of Napoleon's power, that while all the other

enemies of France were dismayed by the marriage of the French emperor with a princess of Austria, he saw that the benefit which Napoleon would derive from it, by its paralyzing his ill-wishers on the Continent, was but temporary; and drew surer inferences for the future from the "recent transactions in Holland," where, in the spring of the year, Louis Buonaparte had resigned the crown which Napoleon had placed on his brows, as "showing that all was hollow within, and that Napo-"leon's system was so inconsistent with the wishes, the "interests, and even the existence of civilized society, that "he could not trust even his own brothers to carry it "into execution."

CHAPTER XIV.

Ciudad Rodrigo is taken by the French—Almeida falls—Wellington issues orders to lay waste the country—Defeats Masseua at Busaco—Trant surprises Coimbra—Wellington enters the lines of Torres Vedras.

MEANWHILE the French began to collect in great numbers on the Portuguese frontier. Junot had taken Astorga in the north of Leon, and the fall of that place encouraged them to renew the attempt on Ciudad Rodrigo. The first week in May, Wellington had in his front the divisions of Ney, Loison, and Kellermann, which he estimated at nearly 50,000 men, and he expected Junot to join them with 15,000 more. Nevertheless, he was in no respect alarmed. He wrote to Hill, who was still in his separate command, that "the plot "was thickening, but that with prudent management "and decision, he did not doubt that we should get "through our difficulties;" and treating him with the confidence which he had formerly shown to Mackenzie, and which he had lately claimed as his own due from the ministers, he bade him feel sure that he himself "had "every disposition to approve of everything which he "might do."

By the middle of the month, the plot thickened still

more. Massena arrived at Salamanca, and took the command of the army of Portugal; the return of the warm season caused the rivers to fall, and to become fordable; and there was every prospect of a speedy commencement of active operations.

Wellington did not expect to be able to save Ciudad Rodrigo; but for the resistance to be made to the enemy on Portuguese ground he felt fully prepared. His own army was in a complete state of efficiency for its numbers, and his confidence in the Portuguese troops increased daily. His chief disquietude arose from seeing the continued weakness and nervousness of the Ministry at home, and from the unreasonableness of some of his officers: some were inclined to quarrel with one another; some with the authorities at home, who did not, as they conceived, pay sufficient deference to their judgment, or evince a sufficient appreciation of their deserts. Some again he found it necessary to admonish to be more gentle in their bearing and language towards the Portuguese authorities. What was more vexatious still, was the feeling of despondency to which many of the officers of all ranks began to give way, and which they did their best to disseminate by writing letters full of anticipations of evils to their friends in every quarter. One officer at this time caused the greatest dismay in Lisbon, by stating in a letter that Massena was pursuing Wellington with 100,000 men, and that 80,000 more were cutting off his retreat upon Lisbon. Others wrote in a similar spirit to the authorities in England, and thus spread opinions injurious not only to the reputation of the army, but also to its prospects of success, by impairing the confidence of the soldiers in their general and in themselves. Wellington complained bitterly of this "system of croaking," and though admitting that officers had a right to

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form their own opinions, yet declared that those "of "high rank and situation ought to keep them to them-"selves," and threatened that if they did not do so, he would send them to England, as many other generals would, he said, have done already.

The Portuguese authorities themselves gave him even more uneasiness (besides causing him considerable embarrassment) by the systematic falsehood of their reports on all subjects. They agreed with the Spaniards in the idea that to exaggerate their own resources and virtues, and to speak contemptuously of those of the enemy, was the best way to encourage a nation to resist its invaders; and they issued inflated proclamations, abusing the French, their ambition, their cruelty, and their rapacity, and exhorting all men "to trample them under foot." Wellington did not think it at all superfluous for the Junta to set their duties before the people, but recommended them to do so in plain, brief language, "without "bombast;" telling them that there was already "plenty "of enthusiasm, cries of 'Viva,' and illuminations, and "patriotic songs and feasts everywhere; but that what "was wanting was the plain, simple performance of his "duty by the individual citizen, each in his station, and "obedience to orders."

At the beginning of June, Ney formally invested Ciudad Rodrigo with his own and Junot's divisions, amounting to 50,000 men. Wellesley, by the position which he had taken up, had delayed this operation for two months, and had compelled the enemy to concentrate their forces in this manner before undertaking it, having from the first decided that nothing would add more to their difficulties than to be compelled to keep together in large masses, which they would find it hard to supply with food. He believed that he could have delayed it

even longer if the Government at home had been strong enough to make it prudent for him to run the slightest risk; but this, as has been said before, was far from being the case; and in spite of the high value that he set on Ciudad Rodrigo, he announced to his brother, Henry Wellesley (who had succeeded the Marquess as ambassador at Cadiz), that after a full consideration of his inferiority in numbers, and especially in cavalry, to the enemy, and the imprudence of as yet placing much confidence in the steadiness of the Portuguese troops, he was resolved not to risk a battle for the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Yet, never deprived of his calm foresight by any circumstances of discouragement, he pronounced that the possession of that fortress by the French would not enable them to drive him out of the country, and he already perceived signs of disagreement between King Joseph and Napoleon, from which he anticipated good effects to the allies.

It was no easy matter for Wellington to persevere in his resolution of risking nothing for the relief of so important a place. The gallantry of the garrison, and of its veteran commander, Andreas Herrasti, was in itself a powerful incentive to succour them. The Spaniards, though he had made no promise of the kind, relied upon his doing so. The best of the Spanish generals, Romana, proposed to combine his army with the British force in an attempt at least to carry off the garrison. The Portuguese were almost equally with the Spaniards desirous of the preservation of the place, since, while it continued in the hands of the allies, the French could hardly invade Portugal. The British army was always eager for battle; and more eager than any one else to see it advance into the plain to succour the beleaguered garrison was Massena himself; confident in

his skill, confident in his long series of previous successes, and confident now in the valour and overpowering numbers of his veteran army as a sure instrument to enable him to display that skill and to add to those triumphs. Wellington stood alike unmoved by the hopes of the Portuguese, by the prayers of the Spaniards, by the well-known wishes and secret murmurs of his own army, and by the temptations and taunts of the enemy. He warned Herrasti himself that he must be guided "by a larger view of the interests of the allies," as concerned the whole war, than by any regard to "the "mere preservation, however important," of a single town. And feeling that "the irrevocable loss of the "whole cause would be the consequence of any failure in "the attempt to relieve it," he decided that "it was his "duty to refrain" from such an attempt. Probably no determination that he ever formed in his life gave him greater pain; but from what he considered his duty, Wellington never swerved. On the 10th of July the place fell, and Massena prepared to cross the Portuguese frontier. Before his overpowering numbers, Wellington was compelled to fall back, but he did so slowly and deliberately, though greatly endangered on one occasion by the rash disobedience of Craufurd, who, in spite of the most positive orders, with his single brigade, braved an encounter with the whole of Ney's division, and owed his escape from being entirely destroyed more to the address and coolness of the regimental officers than to any skill which he himself showed in the action which he had provoked. Yet so considerate was Wellington at all times towards his subordinate officers, and so constant in his desire to show those who were placed in circumstances in which they were forced in the least degree to act on their own judgment, that they might rely on his

favourable interpretation of their conduct, that in his despatches to England he never gave the slightest hint of the disobedience to his strict commands which had been shown, nor did he even express his dissatisfaction to Craufurd himself further than by replying to his assurance that he had been in no danger, "that he himself had been in great danger through his operations."

Even before Ciudad Rodrigo fell, he thought from some of the French movements that they were preparing to attack himself, and after that event he expected them to try and cut off the communication between himself and Hill, who had been for some time on the southern side of the Tagus; and he consequently provided against any such attempt by ordering Hill, if necessary, to cross the river, but giving him at the same time ample discretion as to all the details of his movements.

Massena was compelled to employ a part of his army in garrisons and detachments, so that the force with which he actually crossed the Portuguese frontier did not exceed 55,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry; an army still greatly superior to that of Wellington in numbers, and yet more in the quality of the troops of which it was composed. Contrary, however, to the expectation of Wellington, who had rather anticipated an attack upon himself, he in the middle of August invested Almeida. But this step gave the British general but little anxiety, since the town was well fortified and supplied with necessaries of all kinds, and was held by a sufficient garrison under Brigadier-General Cox, a British officer of tried skill and resolution. Wellington had every reason to rely on a protracted and perhaps a successful resistance being made, and the mere detention of the enemy for a length of time would have been very serviceable to him, when all his hopes were baffled by an

accident. The very first day that the French opened their batteries upon the town, the principal magazine exploded, and the place was at once rendered defenceless. How the explosion was caused is not known, but its effect surpasses anything recorded in the history of war. The whole town, except a very few houses, was destroyed, a vast breach was made in the outer wall, all the guns but three were hurled from the ramparts, 500 citizens were killed, and nearly all the artillerymen; still Cox hoped that, if he could conceal the extent of the disaster for a few days from the French, Wellington might perhaps find a way of assisting him. But the greater part of the Portuguese garrison broke out into a mutiny, encouraged to it by the lieutenant-governor and by Bareiros, the commandant of the artillery, one of the few traitors who dishonoured their country in this war. Bareiros informed Massena of the true state of affairs, and Cox had no choice left but to surrender.

Encouraged by this fortunate event, Massena pressed forwards with great energy, hoping by forced marches to overtake Wellington and to bring him to action before he could be joined by Hill's division. But the British general had taken his measures too skilfully to give his enemy such an advantage. From the very beginning of August he had been busy in carrying out the system which he had announced in the winter, of devastating the country on the line of the French advance, even threatening the villagers with instant death if they remained in their homes. At the same time, he issued a spirited proclamation to the whole nation, reminding them that the length of time during which the French had remained on the frontier had been sufficient to show them what they had to expect from such cruel and faithless enemies. Some of the inhabitants, he said, had

trusted to their promises, and had tried to conciliate the good-will of the French soldiers, but their submission had not saved them from the most cruel outrages. "Their property had been plundered, their habitations "had been burnt, their women had been atrociously "violated; and those whose age or sex did not provoke "the brutal violence of the soldiers had fallen victims to "the imprudent confidence which they had placed in "promises made only to be broken.

"The Portuguese," he continued, "must now see "that no other means remained to avoid the evils with "which they were threatened but a determined and "vigorous resistance, and a firm resolution to obstruct "as much as possible the advance of the enemy into the "interior of the kingdom by removing out of his reach "all such things as might contribute to his subsistence "or facilitate his progress." He reminded them that he had received authority from their sovereign to compel obedience to the commands which he had issued with this view, and while he promised to protect as large a portion of the country as possible, declared that he would treat as traitors to the state all who disregarded his orders, and that they "should be tried and punished "as such an enormous crime required."

The desolation first fell on the valley of the Mondego, in which the population of the district in general zealously seconded Wellington's views, their hatred of the French causing them to bear with cheerfulness the separation of their families—while the men took arms, and the women and children hid themselves among the mountains—and the destruction of their properties and of their homes. To use his own words, "The "country was made a desert, and behind every stone "wall the French found an enemy." But some of their

governors were less patriotic, and jealous even of the general who was saving them; and one individual of great influence, Souza, who was the principal member of the Regency, taking advantage of the general disappointment caused by the loss of Almeida, headed a factious party in that body, which clamoured loudly against Wellington for not having prevented such a disaster, and for not at once retrieving it by an attack upon the triumphant enemy. And the consequence of the perverse misconduct of this faction was that many of the richer inhabitants of the district about to become the seat of war, neglected compliance with Wellington's orders; and though at last, when the enemy was upon them, they fled themselves, they left behind them considerable quantities of provisions, which were of great use to the invaders of their country.

At the beginning of the year, the arrangements of the commissariat department had been so defective that Wellington had forborne to ask for additions to his force, which he would otherwise have desired, from apprehensions of the difficulty of feeding them; but (though there was still room for improvement) he had now placed things on so much better a footing in that respect, that he had no longer any such fears, and the desirableness of having a force more on an equality with that of Massena, caused him to press Lord Liverpool to send him a reinforcement of infantry. He would even have summoned General Graham and the chief part of the British garrison in Cadiz to join him, if he had not been restrained by the orders of the home Government. With evident truth he represented to the minister that a continuance of the cautious system which he had hitherto been compelled to pursue would lose him the good opinion of the Portuguese, on which much de-

pended, and that the imputations which would be levelled at himself would inevitably rebound on the Government, and he entreated him to feel greater confidence in the issue of the contest, and not only to send him the troops now in Sicily, Malta, and Nova Scotia, but to give him authority even to withdraw the greater part of the garrisons from Cadiz and Gibraltar, on condition of his making himself responsible for the safety of those places, of the importance of which he was as fully aware as the Government. He was encouraged to press this request the more strongly by the perusal of letters from the French authorities at Madrid to their government in Paris, which had been intercepted, and which he thought of such importance that he sent them by express to England, showing as they did the inherent and incurable weakness of the system which Napoleon had established in Spain, and that the French emperor was unable to support his armies there by means drawn from France, while from the country itself he could derive no assistance whatever. The partisans and guerrillas were becoming more numerous, and daily doing the French more mischief; at the same time, by reminding the Spanish Regency of these facts, which were all within their own knowledge, he tried to stimulate that body to make more vigorous exertions in the common cause. It was easy for them, he asserted, to raise five good armies, which would be of material injury to the enemy, not by engaging him in pitched battles, in which the Spanish troops certainly did not shine, but "by giving countenance and support to the guerrillas."

The Government at home at once prepared to send him reinforcements, though not to the extent which he had asked; and some regiments arrived from England early in September. They found him drawing his

forces rapidly together, and presenting every day a more formidable front to his pursuers. He had sternly rebuked the Portuguese Regency for the discontent which they had encouraged among the citizens of Lisbon, telling them that he should forget his duty to his own sovereign and to theirs if he "permitted public clamour "or panic to induce him to change in the smallest "degree the system and plan of operations which he had "adopted after mature consideration, and which daily "experience showed to be the only one likely to produce "a good end." They might, he said, and perhaps they would compel him to quit them altogether, but they should not influence his plans while he remained in their country.

But though moving with the greatest caution, and incessantly enjoining the strictest prudence on all his subordinates, he had resolved not to let the campaign close without giving the French a lesson that it was not so much from inability to resist them in the field as in pursuance of a carefully-matured system that he was thus retreating before them. It was also desirable to arrest the progress of the enemy for a few days in order to give time for the removal of the inhabitants of Coimbra, who had been hitherto very slack in obeying his orders to withdraw, and for the more complete devastation of the country between that town and the lines of Torres Vedras; nor, in spite of his lofty disregard of the murmurs of his detractors, could Wellington overlook the advantage of substituting cheerfulness and confidence in the Portuguese Government and in his own army for their existing despondency and discontent. He therefore now applied himself to the discovery of a position strong enough to counterbalance his inferiority in numbers, and in the quality of the Portuguese troops,

who, though they had behaved with great gallantry in several recent skirmishes, could not as yet be reckoned a match for their veteran enemies. Hill joined him on the 21st of September; but even after his arrival he had not above 50,000 men, of whom little more than half were British troops; while Massena had above 60,000, and his superiority in cavalry was still greater in proportion.

On the northern bank of the Mondego, in front of the town of Coimbra, Wellington found ground suited to his purpose, on a high ridge known as the Sierra de Busaco, which on one side came down to the bank of the river, and extended in a northerly direction about eight miles, where it joined another ridge called the Sierra de Caramula, which, making a sharp angle with it, ran in a north-easterly direction as far as the Vouga. On the southern bank of the Mondego was a third range of hills called the Sierra de Murcella, and just at that point a ford presented a passage across the river. The only approaches to Coimbra on the Spanish side were by roads leading over one or other of these ridges; and that of Busaco was traversed throughout its whole length by one which facilitated the movements of our troops, who were now marshalled on its crest, having a small brigade on the Murcella to cover their right, and the cavalry on the left on a road leading from Sardao to Coimbra to prevent the success of any attempt to turn the position in that direction. By the 24th of September, Wellington had made all his arrangements, mingling the Portuguese with the British divisions, and disposing 50 guns on the most available points of the whole line. So difficult did it seem to attack him in front that the army, whose spirits and confidence at once rose with the prospect of battle, feared that Massena

would not venture on the attempt; but Wellington, who was better acquainted with the distress which already began to be felt in the French camp, knew that they must advance or starve, and therefore looked forward to an immediate action, and, with equal certainty, to victory. For the measures which he had adopted of desolating the country on the line of the French advance had already begun to produce its anticipated effect on their large force. In a letter to Berthier, the chief of the staff at Paris, which was intercepted and brought to the British head-quarters, Massena complained bitterly of the difficulties which surrounded him. He represented that not only were the roads so bad that he could scarcely convey his baggage and artillery by them, but that he was marching through a desert; that not a soul was to be seen anywhere; that men and women, young and old, had all fled, dreading "the "barbarity of the English, who shot every one who "dared to remain in his home."* Imputations of cruelty came with but a bad grace from Massena, who had recently provoked a severe remonstrance from Wellington against the unmilitary inhumanity of an order which he had issued to give no quarter to the Portuguese ordenanzas, because they were not clothed in a regular uniform, though they were, as Wellington explained to him, compelled by the ancient laws of the country to serve, and were therefore as much entitled to be regarded as soldiers as the militia or the regular troops, and (as some of Massena's officers could testify to him) had treated their prisoners with as much humanity as the most regularly-disciplined soldiers.

The difficulties of the roads of which the marshal complained prevented the French from arriving in front

* The original letter is given in the Wellington Dispatches.

of the British position till the afternoon of the 24th. If the advice of Ney and Reynier, who commanded the leading divisions of about 40,000 men, had been taken, the attack on it would have taken place the next morning; but Massena, who was still in the rear, would not sanction such a step till he arrived himself with the remainder of his army; and for two days nothing took place of a more serious character than one or two smart skirmishes in which the French sustained a far heavier loss than the allies, and in which the Portuguese behaved with admirable steadiness, and earned from the British general warm praises, which greatly encouraged them for the sterner shock which awaited them.

Massena reached the front in the afternoon of the 26th, and after having carefully examined the whole of his adversary's position, gave orders to attack it at daybreak the next morning. If we may trust the criticism of one of his countrymen, whose judgment however of his comrades in this war appears to have been somewhat tainted by that jealousy from which none of the French marshals were altogether free, Massena, though a commander who inspired his troops with great confidence on the day of battle, was not skilful in manœuvres.* The truth, however, is rather that Wellington had chosen his ground with such judgment that it afforded no opportunity for complicated or scientific evolutions; and Massena, whose military glance was rarely at fault, saw plainly that it was only by a straightforward assault in front that the allies could be driven from their position. It was a formidable enterprise to assail such troops so posted, but if the most dauntless courage could succeed, on that Massena could safely reckon. The day

* See 'Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 19.

had scarcely dawned when Reynier led a strong force against our 3rd division, which, under Picton, formed what may be called the right centre of the British line; while Ney, who had a steeper and more rugged height to ascend, conducted a stronger column against the left centre, where Pack and Craufurd were posted with the light division and a brigade of Portuguese, supported also by a portion of the 1st division under Spencer. With almost inconceivable rapidity, Reynier's troops ascended the hill, and for a moment threw the division opposed to them into confusion; but at the critical moment Wellington himself brought two guns loaded with grape against their flank, and directed two fresh regiments from Hill's division on the right to charge them in front, and the French were driven down the hill with great slaughter. On the other side, Ney, whose impetuous gallantry was united to the most unshaken resolution, had even worse success. An unceasing storm of bullets from muskets, rifles, and heavy artillery, neither confused nor delayed the intrepid veterans who formed his column, and after great exertion, and in spite of heavy loss, they reached the summit of the hill in good order; but the moment that they did so, their hopes of victory were dashed to the ground. Craufurd, who had concealed the chief body of his men behind a favouring hollow, instantly led them on with a shout to the charge; 1,800 bayonets astonished the panting Frenchmen with a dash as impetuous as their own, and better sustained. The assailants were driven back on one another; a terrible fire from the victorious British completed their confusion, and the battle was won. Our entire loss in killed and wounded did not exceed 1,300 men; that of the French was enormous. Besides nearly 300 prisoners, among whom was General Simon, they left

nearly 2,000 slain on the field, and their wounded were above double that number.

It had been a most important victory; not indeed in any practical fruit, for none such was expected or attainable. And if Wellington had been able to discard all political considerations, the battle would not have been fought at all. But its moral results were of great value. It was the first time that the Portuguese had encountered the French in a pitched battle, and their success gave them that confidence for the future which was the prolific parent of yet greater glories. Wellington judiciously gave their conduct a very prominent place in his despatch, declaring that "they had shown themselves worthy of contending in the same rank with "British troops in the interesting cause which they "afforded the best hopes of saving;" and deservedly bestowed the highest praise on Beresford, to whose unremitting and skilful labours he ascribed the high degree of discipline and efficiency which they had shown.

Wellington's inferiority in cavalry rendered it impossible for him to improve his victory by any offensive operations against the defeated army; nor indeed in any case would it have been his purpose to advance against them unless they had made a decided retreat: but Massena was not sufficiently discouraged for such a step, determining rather, in obedience to Napoleon's original orders, to continue his advance towards Lisbon; and he prepared to attempt to turn the British left by a road which a peasant showed him leading over the Sierra de Caramula to Boyalva. Anticipating such a movement on his part, Wellington had ordered Colonel Trant, who was at the head of a most efficient brigade of Portuguese militia, to march to Sardao to prevent it; but in consequence of a mistake of one of the Portuguese gene-

rals, Trant was sent round by Oporto, and consequently did not reach Sardao till the enemy had become masters of the road. As they therefore could now get to Coimbra without further hindrance, Wellington withdrew from Busaco, crossed the Mondego at Coimbra, and as rapidly as the maintenance of order would permit, retreated on Torres Vedras. He himself was in the highest spirits, and felt quite sure that the late battle had put an end to all danger of the French becoming masters of Portugal during the ensuing winter. And the events of the next few days were not calculated to lower his confidence. Massena reached Coimbra the day after the British army had passed through it, and not yet having any suspicion of the existence of the lines, halted there three days to restore order among his troops. On the 4th of October he resumed his march on Wellington's track, and one or two skirmishes ensued which were for the most part to our advantage. But he had scarcely quitted Coimbra, when Trant, though his force did not amount to above 1,500 men, formed the project of recovering that town; and on the morning of the 7th successfully surprised it, making prisoners of the small detachment which Massena had left to guard it, and taking all his stores and his hospitals, containing nearly 5,000 men, the greater part of whom had been wounded at Busaco.

But neither this disaster nor a change in the weather, which suddenly became very tempestuous, arrested Massena's progress; and he pressed on rapidly, never doubting that the British were retreating to their ships, when, on the 10th of October, he came in sight of the first fortifications of the lines, and found a barrier in his front, which his experienced glance at once told him was likely to defy all his efforts to surmount it.

These celebrated lines derived their name from an

ancient tower on the southern side of the river Zizandre, from the mouth of which the outer line of fortifications extended along a range of hills to the village of Alhandra on the Tagus, a distance of twenty-nine miles, having a lofty mountain, the Monte Agraça, in the centre, which commanded a view of nearly the whole of our own position, and also of that of the enemy. Behind it ran the second line, five miles shorter than the first, from Quintella, on the Tagus, to the mouth of the river Santa Lorenza. This was the stronger barrier of the two, since Wellington, expecting to have been driven within his defences at an earlier period of the year, did not at first contemplate making a permanent stand in the outer line; but looked on it more as a sort of outwork to the second, till the lateness of Massena's arrival in front of it having given time for the erection of stronger works than at first entered into his plan, and the rains having so swollen the Zizandre as to make that river an important feature in the defence, he resolved to maintain the first line resolutely; by which step he gained additional ground for his troops, and for the citizens of Lisbon. Both lines presented the same general character: the hills, steep and rugged in most parts, were carefully scarped wherever nature had made the ascent easier than usual; the ravines, where their precipitous depth did not render them impassable, were blocked up by huge walls, some not less than sixteen feet thick and forty feet high, or by still more enormous barriers, called in military language, *abattis*, constructed of full-grown trees, oaks and chestnuts, the monarchs of the forest, dug up and then piled on one another, with roots and branches inextricably interlaced so as to form a fence gigantic and insuperable. Along the entire length of both lines was erected a chain of redoubts and forts, bristling with above 600 guns, commanding all the

external approaches; while within the lines roads had been constructed in all directions, so that support could be promptly conveyed to any point that might be assailed; and telegraphs had been erected to convey reports or orders without delay. And these works were garrisoned by an army of 130,000 men—British, Portuguese of all kinds, and two divisions of Spaniards under the Marquis Romana, the ablest and most virtuous of the Spanish commanders, of whose co-operation, in spite of his general resolution to avoid acting in concert with the Spaniards, Wellington was glad to avail himself, partly in order to avoid the appearance of having any portion of these extensive defences incompletely protected; and partly, in all probability, from a desire to stimulate the patriotism and courage of the Spaniards by giving them, in a position where they could do no harm, a share, however small, in so honourable a service.

Thinking everything in war uncertain, and resolved to leave no danger unprovided for, Wellington, though fully trusting in the impregnable strength of these lines, had also constructed a third barrier at the mouth of the Tagus, to secure to his troops a safe embarkation in case of defeat. There was no occasion to use it. No marshal in the French service had more experience, both in the attack and defence of fortifications, than Massena, the conqueror of Zurich and the defender of Genoa; but after a careful examination of every part of the front line, he declined to peril his reputation by an assault on a position which his judgment told him was unassailable. One or two skirmishes which took place between his advanced guard and some of the British regiments, in which the loss sustained by his men was considerably greater than that which they inflicted, did not encourage him to alter his decision; and he consequently contented himself with taking up a strong position in our front,

hoping, by means of magazines which he began to form at Santarem, and by foraging parties which searched the country in his rear, to maintain himself, and to blockade us till reinforcements should enable him to act offensively with a better prospect of success.

The divisions of his army were from necessity so separated, that Wellington might have attacked some of them with an apparent certainty of advantage; but, looking to the difficulty of repairing any losses sustained in battle by reinforcements from England, and at the handle that even the slightest check which he might sustain would afford to those who counselled the relinquishment of the war, he thought it wiser to spare his men, and to trust to the scarcity which he felt assured would soon visit the French camp, for securing to him all the benefit which he could expect from a victory.

He did send out one small body of troops under Colonel Waters, which intercepted many of Massena's foraging parties; and he also despatched one brigade with a few guns across the Tagus, to prevent any attempt which the French might make to cross the river and to avail themselves of the resources of the Alentejo; while Trant with his brigade harassed the enemy's rear, cutting off stragglers and convoys, and keeping them in a state of continued watchfulness and alarm almost as distressing as the diminution of their supplies.

Meantime, in the British camp the troops were not only enjoying rest and a fair quantity of supplies, but more relaxation in the way of amusement than often falls to the lot of an army in front of an enemy. The regimental officers encouraged athletic sports and games among the men; and Wellington, who was always attached to field sports, and who in the preceding winter had sent for a small pack of hounds from England,

afforded the officers ample sport in hunting and coursing, which was increased after they quitted the lines and advanced into the more open country.* Nor did he omit to take opportunities of amusing the fleet and the principal citizens of the capital; but having received a command from England to invest Beresford with the Order of the Bath, he showed his pleasure at the honour thus conferred on his gallant comrade by celebrating his investiture with all the splendour of which circumstances would admit: giving a splendid banquet to all the chief officers of both fleet and army, and a ball to which he invited all the officers of both services, and all the chief Portuguese, and which he opened himself, dancing and entering into the festivities of the evening with as much apparent relish as the youngest ensign or midshipman. And the consequence of this judicious treatment of his army was, that he was able to report to the authorities at home, that it was in a very unusual state of health, in good order and spirits, and ready for any service that might be required of it.

He himself had more need than the hardest-worked private in his army of some relaxation to divert his mind amid its manifold cares and anxieties. They were not caused by the designs or power of the enemy; for he had been in the lines little more than a week when he was able to pronounce it certain that they could do him no mischief: that they would lose the greater part of their army if they attacked him, and would starve if they stayed much longer: in short, that the "lines had "saved the country." But the faction which Souza led in the Regency, alarmed at the vicinity of the enemy to Lisbon, harassed him more than ever with their opposi-

* See Lord Londonderry, p. 236, duod. ed.; Sidney's 'Life of Hill,' p. 119, &c.

tion to, and their complaints of his measures, and with endless suggestions of absurd operations; while at the same time they neglected all the duties which properly belonged to them, not even furnishing tents from Lisbon to protect the troops from the weather, nor provisions for their own soldiers, who would have disbanded or starved had not Wellington supplied them from his own magazines, and who actually did, in consequence of their distress, desert in considerable numbers, while the Regency refused to put the laws in force against the offenders. Nor were Souza and his friends contented with thus impeding the British general in Portugal, but they also sent an agent to the Brazils to misrepresent his conduct to the Prince Regent, and even with letters to the Prince of Wales in England, to vilify the man who, in their own despite, was saving themselves and their country.

At last, Wellington, wearied out with their vexatious folly, gave them formal notice that, if Souza continued a member of the Government, he himself would resign the command of the army, and quit the Peninsula. And at the same time he made a strong representation to the Brazilian Court of the impossibility of his acting in concert with those persons who were at the head of affairs in Portugal, which produced its proper effect on the mind of the Prince Regent, who at once confirmed and increased his authority, greatly strengthened his hands by giving Mr. Stuart, the English ambassador, a place in the Regency in Portugal; and at a somewhat later period, gave him power to remove Souza and his party from it, and even from the country, if such a step should seem necessary for the successful prosecution of his projects for the defence of the kingdom.

CHAPTER XV.

Great distress in the French camp—Massena retreats to Santarem—Wellington pursues him—Both armies remain inactive for some time—Romana dies—Graham defeats the French at Barossa—The Opposition in Parliament changes its tone—Wellington still confident of success.

HAD the Portuguese authorities enforced obedience to Wellington's order for the removal of provisions and the destruction of the mills between the Mondego and the lines, the French could not have remained in their position a single week. As it was, by the beginning of November the distress in their camp began to be very severe; and Wellington was fully aware of it, but still, as it was his opinion that Massena's advance had been dictated rather by his financial embarrassments, which, while he was ignorant of the barrier about to be opposed to his progress by the lines, he had hoped to relieve in some degree by the plunder of Lisbon; than by military considerations, which would have recommended a retreat after the battle of Busaco, he felt it impossible to calculate upon his future movements. He had no doubt but that the French marshal would endeavour to maintain his position as long as possible, in the hope of receiving reinforcements from France; but at the same time he reckoned that, what with its losses at Busaco, and the

sickness caused by its privations, his army was probably diminished by at least 15,000 men since the fall of Almeida, and that there was but little chance of his obtaining such additional strength as would enable him to attack us; while every augmentation of his force would in one way increase his perplexities, by adding to the number of mouths which he would have to feed. He also took into his consideration the approach of winter, already heralded by bad weather and heavy rain, which, by swelling the rivers and injuring the roads, would add to the difficulties of the retreat of the French in proportion as it was delayed. He therefore forbore to accelerate their withdrawal by any offensive movement, and waited patiently prepared to pursue them with vigour as soon as their general's pertinacity should yield to the exigencies by which he knew him to be surrounded. He was aware also that want was not the only, nor even the worst evil with which Massena had to struggle; but that it had brought with it others which to his own mind would have been far more grievous: a scorn of the restraints of discipline, and an eagerness to desert which was thinning his ranks to an almost incredible extent.

The retreat of the enemy took place sooner than he expected. At the beginning of November, Massena having already sent his sick to Santarem, constructed a bridge over the Zezere, and when it was destroyed by a sudden flood, quickly restored it: and being in some degree favoured by the weather, which was unusually foggy, on the morning of the 15th of November, withdrew his troops with such skilful secrecy that the whole army was in full retreat before any suspicion of his intentions was entertained at the British head-quarters. Nor was it till the next day that it was possible to ascertain the precise direction of his march. But on the

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16th, correct information of his movements having been obtained, Wellington commenced an active pursuit with his whole army, soon overtook him, harassing his rear with his cavalry, and taking many prisoners; till, on the evening of the 17th, Massena halted at Santarem, a small town on the summit of a steep mountain on the banks of the Tagus, about thirty miles from the nearest point of the lines, and between two small rivers, the Rio Mayor and the Aviella.

Here he was master of a fertile district abounding both in crops and cattle, which the inhabitants had omitted to destroy or to remove; and to preserve this advantage he proceeded to strengthen his position by entrenchments, with the manifest intention of taking up his winter quarters in so favourable a locality. Wellington arrived the next day in sight of Santarem, and was led at first, by a report from one of his officers, to believe that the bulk of Massena's army was still in full retreat, and that it was only the rear-guard that was left there; and he designed at once to attack the French outposts; but the heavy rain which fell in the night, and rendered the Rio Mayor impassable, prevented any such movement, and likewise any accurate examination either of the position or of the force occupying it.

In a few days, however, it became evident that the whole French army was collected at Santarem, and also that its position was too strong to be assailed with any reasonable hope of success. Wellington therefore halted his army also, protecting his front by strong works against any sudden attack, and establishing his head-quarters at Cartaxo, a village on the right bank of the Rio Mayor; and for upwards of three months the two armies rested in front of one another in a state of comparative inaction.

Reinforcements were anxiously looked for by both generals; but Wellington, knowing that those which would be sent to Massena would far outnumber any that he himself could expect, reckoned that he might again have need of the protection of the lines of Torres Vedras, and strengthened them in many parts, while at the same time he constructed fresh works on the left or southern bank of the Tagus, enclosing the narrow promontory opposite to Lisbon by fortifications running from Aldea Gallega, a village on the Tagus, a few miles above the city, to Setuval; and erecting strong forts on the heights of Almada, opposite to the city. At the same time, to guard against any offensive movement of Soult, who was believed to be preparing to advance along the Guadiana, he greatly strengthened the division which had been under Hill's command, and as that general had returned to England in consequence of ill health, he united it to the Portuguese army under Beresford, who consequently now found himself at the head of nearly 20,000 men, and fixed his head-quarters at Chamusca, on the southern side of the Tagus, a little above Santarem; having for his principal task to prevent the passage of that river by any of Massena's division, and also all communication between that marshal and Soult.

It may well be supposed that this period of apparent inactivity did not please everybody. The Portuguese Regency was dissatisfied at the French being still allowed to remain in their territories: and some even of Wellington's own officers proposed to him different measures for removing them, some of which evinced great military knowledge, many even offering great probability of partial success: but, however any such advantage might have contributed to his own present credit,

or have been desirable to the Ministry, as disarming the Opposition in Parliament, Wellington considered that it could hardly have any permanently beneficial influence on the issue of the war, while, if purchased by any considerable loss of men, it would, however splendid in appearance, be prejudicial to the general cause; and therefore he rejected all such suggestions; sure in his own mind of ultimate success; and certain, at all events, that the system which he was adopting "was the only "one that could be entirely successful." He was aware that the people in some districts were suffering severely from the invasion of the French: but still he wisely judged "that it was better that a part of the country "should suffer than that the whole should be lost;" and he accordingly resolved to persevere in his resolution to risk nothing, but to remain contented with the certain advantages of his position. And he conceived that he had reason to feel this contentment. He ascertained from his prisoners, and from the deserters, who were very numerous, that by the middle of December their army was suffering great distress; and though he believed that, influenced by the political advantage of appearing to retain a hold on Portugal, Napoleon would keep it there till the last moment, even if he should be forced to denude the northern and central provinces of Spain of troops, in order to reinforce Massena's army, yet he felt confident that if well supplied with provisions, he should be able to "hold his ground against even this accumulation of "force," and also that his maintenance of his position must eventually compel the enemy to withdraw from Andalusia. He even thought it better for us that the two armies should at present be in Portugal than in Spain; since, while this was the case, we were nearer to our communication and supplies, and the enemy

were further from theirs; while their efforts to remain left the north of Spain open to the operations of the guerrillas, from whom alone of the Spanish forces any benefit to the cause of the allies could as yet be expected.

But though he was thus satisfied with the position and condition of his own army, and also with the daily increasing efficiency of the Portuguese troops, he was more than ever displeased with the Governments of both Spain and Portugal. That of Portugal was weak at all points, and especially remiss in the matters in which he was most interested, the maintenance of their troops. Beresford reported to him that every department of his army was in a most wretched condition; pay was in arrear, supplies were not provided, desertion was not punished: and it seemed hopeless to prevail on the Regency to adopt any vigorous and well-sustained system for raising a revenue, which could alone enable it to remedy these differences. Wellington suggested to them the introduction of some assessed taxes like our own: but, above all, the honest impartial enforcement of their existing fiscal regulations; telling them, that in spite of all that he might do with his army, unless they exerted themselves, "their cause was gone." The indolence of the common people, too, at times caused him great embarrassment. Unless under the instant pressure of want, they would not work even for hire; and the authorities would not make them work: so that he had often the greatest difficulty in procuring carts to remove the corn and provisions which he was able to purchase in the country. Nor was the spirit of the wealthier classes in general such as ought to have been shown by a people whose independence was at stake towards allies who were making such unexampled efforts

in their cause. The citizens of Lisbon complained of being compelled to provide billets for those British troops whom it was necessary to keep in the capital; and the Government supported them; willing, for the sake of personal popularity, "to indulge the indolence "of the citizens, even at the risk of the loss of the "country." One great noble demanded in angry terms to be paid for some trees on one of his farms which had been cut down to make abattis; and even the Prince Regent objected to barren trees in the royal parks being used for fire-wood for the troops. Wellington gave a brief but indignant reply to such remonstrances, which he declared were disgraceful to all who made or countenanced them. He had no patience, he said, with such selfishness. The British soldiers had fought and were fighting bravely for the country. The people who thus complained would owe the preservation of "their property from robbery and confiscation, of "their persons from slavery, and of their families from "violation and outrage," to their exertions; and were they to want fires in the winter, or to lie in the streets of the capital which they were defending? His patience was nearly worn out; and he more than once asked himself, not only whether such a people could be saved, but whether "they were worth saving."

In Spain matters were even worse. The Cortes had been convened, and had met at Cadiz in the autumn: but instead of taking any steps to resist the enemy, beyond passing and publishing a resolution that they would never submit to him, they occupied themselves wholly in framing a constitution on democratic principles, and in devising measures calculated to secure the permanence and omnipotence of their own authority. However popular their proceedings may have been in

Cadiz, the citizens of which city had in point of fact elected a large proportion of the members of the Cortes,* they were hateful to the inhabitants of the rural districts; and Wellington soon perceived that they were only adding one more to the manifold causes of division which were distracting and enfeebling the country, instead of applying themselves to healing those which already existed. Nor did he see any prospect of remedying this evil, or of rousing either Government or people to healthy, useful exertion. He declared that in the last campaign even those provinces which were free from French oppression had done nothing, and that he had no expectation whatever that in the next campaign they would do more: their courage, such as it was, he pronounced to be merely passive, never excited to action, except by the pressure of instant necessity, nor ever directed by foresight. Even if the authorities should be disposed to employ British officers to discipline their troops, he doubted whether those officers would be able to effect anything unless the supreme command were likewise given to a British general. And if (as he was aware that a party in the Spanish Government wished) that command should be offered to himself, though he thought that if he had been invested with that power before the battle of Ocana, he could have saved Spain, he declared that such authority would not now enable him to effect anything for the common cause unless more "effectual measures should be taken to feed, pay, "clothe, and discipline the Spanish troops" than he had any hope of seeing adopted.

Even with his own Government he had many causes of dissatisfaction: their ill-judged economy leading them to annoy him by vexatious interference with his autho-

* See Alison's 'History of Europe,' vol. x., c. 65, pp. 1—25. (14 vol. ed.)

rity in petty matters, and often crippling his serious operations; while the vacillating and contradictory orders which he continually received provoked him at times to declare that "they were all gone mad." They, however, sent him some reinforcements; and at the beginning of 1811 he earnestly requested them to send him still more, and to send them in time to be of use the moment the return of spring allowed the resumption of active measures.

In the first week of the new year, the French began to give indications of an intention to resume offensive operations without delay. A reinforcement of 8,000 men arrived in Massena's camp; and Mortier crossed the Guadiana, and took possession of Merida without resistance; since, though Wellington had previously warned the Spanish generals to destroy the bridges, they, as a matter of course, had neglected his warning. The possession by the enemy of so important a place gave him great anxiety. If the Spaniards had defended it "for a few days only," he thought that Massena must have retired from Portugal; but their neglect had given Mortier the means of invading the Alentejo, a fertile province in which Wellington's orders to destroy or remove provisions had been wholly neglected; or of establishing his communications with Seville; or of advancing towards the Zezere to co-operate with Massena. Reports of his movements were so conflicting, that the British general was at a loss to know which operation he was meditating; therefore for a time he contented himself with desiring Beresford to watch the Tagus, so as to prevent any communication between the two marshals, and waited patiently for the further development of their plans; expecting, however, at all events to be attacked by them early in February.

For such an attack he felt sufficiently prepared: he was far more uneasy for the safety of Badajoz, which was threatened by Mortier's movements, and which he scarcely hoped to see preserved; though it was a place of the very greatest importance, and though he had no doubt that the Spanish army under Romana in Estremadura was sufficient to protect it, if the measures which he recommended were at once executed. Romana, however, was taken ill, and died before the end of January, to the great concern of Wellington, who pronounced "his loss the greatest which, under existing "circumstances, the cause could sustain;" he having been, of all the Spanish generals, the only one who had cordially co-operated with him, and who had taken his advice without jealousy.

He sought to conciliate the good-will of the Spanish army by sending a regiment to Lisbon to assist in paying military honours to the remains of the deceased marquis. And at the same time, he endeavoured to put himself on a footing of similarly friendly confidence with his successor Mendizabal; assuring him of his desire to act towards him with the same frankness and sincerity that he had shown to Romana, and at all times to render him all the assistance in his power.

Beresford succeeded in preventing all communication between Massena and Mortier; so that Wellington soon perceived that the attack which he expected would not take place, and that the French would rather direct their first attention to making themselves masters of Badajoz: but he found greater difficulty in stopping Massena's communications with Lisbon, which were carried on by the friends of different Portuguese, some of them of high rank, who were serving in the French army; and which put the marshal in possession of minute details

of information about the English force, position, and expected operations.

The leisure still afforded to Wellington by Massena's inaction he devoted to improving the condition of his own army in many respects; and among the subjects which gave him anxiety was the question of the religious instruction of his soldiers, which was in a very unsatisfactory state. He wrote a strong letter to the authorities at the Horse Guards on the subject, complaining that the pay given to army chaplains was insufficient, and that in consequence it was difficult to get suitable men to accept the appointment. In fact, there was, and had been for some time, only one chaplain in the whole of his army. And he urged the adoption of a more liberal system, not merely on religious, but also on military grounds, affirming that experience had taught him that religion "was the greatest support and aid to "military discipline and order."

He had nearly even better information of Massena's strength and plans than Massena had of his, having gained over a French officer of rank to supply him with regular intelligence. Not that two such powerful armies could be thus so long stationed in front of each other without occasional skirmishes: in one of which, Junot, trying to surprise the British commander, received a wound which disabled him for the rest of the campaign, and a lesson in the courtesies of war instead of that which he had designed to furnish to his adversary in its tactics. Wellington was apparently acquainted with the events of the siege of Lerida, as narrated by Grammont; and thinking the courtesy of Don Gregorio Brice,* the gallant commander of that garrison, an example worthy

* See the account of the courtesies interchanged between Don Gregorio and the Prince of Condé. Grammont's 'Mémoires,' c. viii.

of imitation, at least within the Peninsula, sent the wounded marshal * a present of fruit, accompanied by a packet of letters from Madame Junot, which the guerrillas had intercepted, in which the lady expressed herself greatly perplexed as to the reasons to be furnished to the Emperor for her husband's continual failures before Wellington.

By the middle of February, he heard the French marshal had been preparing to retire when he was stopped by orders brought by General Foy from the Emperor, who was encouraged by the state of affairs in England (where George III. had again become insane with but little prospect of recovery) to entertain an expectation of a general peace, in the negotiations for which he thought that his position would be improved by retaining for a little longer his hold in Portugal. All military considerations must have made Massena anxious to retreat. His magazines were almost exhausted, and his outposts and foraging parties were incessantly harassed by the Portuguese light troops and ordenanza, who inflicted great injury on them, and took numbers of prisoners.

In Spain, matters did not prosper with the allies equally well. All Wellington's conciliatory tact had failed to induce Mendizabal to adhere to the plans which Romana had been preparing to adopt at his death, and the Spaniard, as he neglected all the precautions of entrenching his position which the British general had recommended, was attacked by the French with very inferior numbers, and defeated with the loss of the greater part of his army, and of all his baggage and artillery. It showed how contagious both courage and cowardice are

* Wellington's expression to Raikes, to whom he related the story, was, that he sent Junot the fruit "as a lesson of the old school."—Raikes, iv., 311.

that though when fighting by the side of British battalions the Portuguese had behaved invariably well, a Portuguese brigade which was concerned in this battle, in spite of all the efforts of its British officers, fled as fast and as far as any of the Spaniards. Wellington, though not surprised, was greatly vexed at this disaster, which prevented his execution of the plans which he had formed for the preservation of Badajoz, of which he had now less hope than ever, though he was still resolved to make the attempt to save it if circumstances should enable him to do so.

By the beginning of March, Massena found himself unable any longer to maintain his position. He had now no more provisions remaining than would suffice his army till it reached the frontier, and the privations which it had already suffered had caused so much sickness that its effective strength was reduced to 40,000 men. He knew also that reinforcements from England had reached Lisbon, so that he might expect an attack if he remained; and accordingly, having destroyed such portions of his artillery and stores as he could not remove, on the night of the 5th he broke up from Santarem and retreated towards the Mondego. Wellington instantly put his army in motion to pursue him, though he was again in great want of money, and was more embarrassed still by the necessitous state of the Portuguese army, which their own Government took no pains to supply, and which he could only save from starvation by exhausting the magazines intended for his own soldiers. It was in vain that he addressed indignant remonstrances to the Regency on this shameful neglect. One faction replied to him by false statements of the supplies which they said had been furnished, and by still falser imputations on himself, as if their shortcomings

had been caused by his measures; the other by writing him anonymous letters full of abuse, in some of which he detected the handwriting of Souza himself, and by employing agents in London to publish libels on his conduct and caricatures of his person.

The French "marched literally night and day." Wellington pursued with almost equal vigour, in order to prevent them from undertaking anything against the northern provinces; harassing their rear, and taking many prisoners. At the same time, he telegraphed to Badajoz, promising the garrison immediate assistance, and was preparing to send Beresford with a large force to its relief when he received news of its fall. The first governor, General Menacho, had been unfortunately killed, and his successor, Imas, sold the place to the French, surrendering it at the moment when he had received news of the force which was coming to his assistance. Wellington was also anxious for Coimbra, and directed his first operations with a view to prevent Massena from recovering that important town; and he resolved to bring the French to action as soon as he had collected his army in sufficient numbers, since for the first three or four days of his pursuit he was accompanied by little more than his advanced guard. It was the 11th of March before he was joined by all his divisions, and he at once prepared to attack; but Massena was not inclined to afford him the chance of a pitched battle. "The whole country," as Wellington wrote to the Secretary of State, "afforded many advantageous posi-"tions to a retreating army," of which Massena and Ney, who commanded the French rear-guard, availed themselves with great skill, though exhibiting at the same time the most ruthless cruelty, plundering and murdering the inhabitants, and burning the towns and

villages as they passed; supplying a practical commentary on "the proclamation of the French commander-in-chief, "in which he told the inhabitants of Portugal that he "was not come to make war upon them, but with a "powerful army of 110,000 men to drive the English "into the sea," which Wellington hoped would not be without its effect "on the people of this and other "nations, whom it might teach what value they ought to "place on such promises and assurances."

Four or five days of constant skirmishes and combats ensued, in all of which the superiority of Wellington's skill over that of his adversary was equally apparent. Sometimes he attacked them in front; sometimes he turned their positions by operations on their flank; in one way or another he drove them back from Pombal, from Redinha, from Casal Nova, from Fons d'Aronce; always inflicting on them a loss far greater than he himself sustained, and taking many prisoners. Once or twice he was compelled to halt a day from want of provisions, but the moment that they reached him he renewed the pursuit. The steep banks of the Alva, and the rocky defiles leading upon Guarda alike failed to enable Massena to check his victorious progress. At last, on the 3rd of April, on the banks of the Coa at Sabugal, the French marshal did endeavour to make a stand, and a fierce conflict ensued between a portion of each army, in which the British superiority was fully maintained. Our loss was very trifling; that of the French was above 1,500 men; and two days afterwards Massena crossed the frontier, and for the second time the soil of Portugal was freed from the foot of the invader.

It is an extraordinary proof of the skill with which Wellington husbanded the strength of his army that

the operations of the month which elapsed from the time when the French quitted Santarem till the day they entered Spain did not cost him, in killed, wounded, and missing, 500 men, while the loss of the French amounted to more than ten times that number. He had good reason to congratulate his troops, Portuguese as well as British, on such a result, and to look with especial pride and confidence on his own soldiers, of whom he thought he had now cured the French of saying that "they were not a manœuvring army;" and he declared that "he desired no better sport than to "meet one of their columns *en masse* with his line."

There was no risk of his exultation making him neglectful of future danger; but there was every probability of its having such an effect on the Portuguese; and he therefore issued a proclamation to the nation, pointing out how events had hitherto justified his warnings and his measures, congratulating them on their present deliverance, but admonishing them at the same time, that "although the danger was removed, it was "not entirely gone by." He predicted that the common enemy would renew his attempts against them as long as they had anything to lose, and entreated them therefore at once to prepare for a decided and steady resistance. Those who were capable of wielding arms should learn the use of them; those who had property should make arrangements for its concealment or removal; and then, should the enemy again invade the country, whatever the superiority of his force might be, the result would be the same as that which they had just witnessed, and "the independence of Portugal and the happiness of "its inhabitants would be finally established to their "eternal honour."

In the south of Spain also our arms had had brilliant

success, and Cadiz had been placed almost out of danger by the brilliant victory won at Barossa by General Graham on the 5th of March. Yet, in spite of the great advantages that had been gained in every quarter, the difficulties of the Ministry at home were so great, from the uncertainty of their own position, that they were almost inclined to give up the contest, or, what came to the same thing, at least from motives of economy to reduce our force so as to disable Wellington from prosecuting it with the vigour which would alone justify the continuance of the struggle by success. Not that they were embarrassed by the Opposition, which on the subject of the war was no longer unanimous. Lord Grenville, indeed, still objected to the aid which the ministers, by Wellington's advice, were prepared to afford the Portuguese, declaring that "the struggle "could never be carried on by Great Britain single-"handed, and that, in spite of ministerial boastings, "the British army possessed no more of Portugal than "the ground which it actually occupied." But others began to adopt a more liberal and patriotic tone. Lord Grey, much to his honour, recanted the imputations which he had previously levelled at Wellington's military skill, avowing, in supporting a vote of thanks to him and to the British and Portuguese armies, that, "in "proportion to the pain which he had felt in withhold-"ing his assent to such a vote on a previous occasion "was the pleasure which he now experienced in con-"tributing his mite of approbation;" admitting that he had been deceived in his anticipations of the result of the late campaign, and giving the General due credit for having "inflicted upon the enemy a loss equal to that "which could have been expected from a great victory "at a very small expense to the allied army;" while his

relation, Mr. Whitbread, who in the debates of the preceding year had outrun nearly all his party in the vehemence of his denunciations of both Government and General, wrote to Wellington to express the entire change in the opinions of himself and others of his party which had been wrought by his firmness and skill; and Wellington, much gratified, replied to his letter with a frank avowal of the pleasure which the receipt of it had given him, as showing that British statesmen in general, however they might be influenced by party feeling, "could not be unjust towards an officer in the service of "the country abroad." At the same time he expostulated strongly with the Ministry on the reductions which they proposed to make in his army. He showed them clearly that their belief that the recent campaign had been more costly than those of 1808 and 1809 was a mistake, and he argued fairly that the whole expense of the army could not be attributed to the war, since if it were withdrawn from the Peninsula it would not be disbanded, and even at home it would cost a considerable sum to maintain it in an efficient state. He reminded them that some of the expense of which they complained had been incurred by the adoption of measures to which he had objected, and which had proved useless, and repeated his opinion that it was the interest "of Great "Britain to employ in Portugal the largest army that "could be spared from other services;" and in opposition to their proposal that he should send home a portion of his troops, he recommended them "to increase the force "as much as possible, putting down the establishments "elsewhere:" and he undertook to say that if they did so, and "put it in his power to avail himself of every "opportunity" for favourable action that might offer itself, "they would be sure of holding Portugal as long

"as they pleased." While, taking a wider view of the state of Europe, of the vast ambition of Napoleon, and of his unextinguishable hatred of Great Britain, he avowed his conviction that "if the British army were "for any reason to withdraw from the Peninsula, and "the French Government were relieved from the pressure "of military operations on the Continent, they would "incur all risks to land an army in His Majesty's "dominions." Rising into eloquence as he painted how "Then indeed would commence an expensive contest; "then would His Majesty's subjects discover what are "the miseries of war, of which, by the blessing of God, "they have hitherto had no knowledge; and the cultiva- "tion and the beauty and prosperity of the country, "and the virtue and happiness of its inhabitants, would "be destroyed, whatever might be the result of the "military operations;" and he prayed that "God might "save him from ever being a witness, much less an actor "in the scene."

CHAPTER XVI.

Wellington invests Almeida—The battle of Fuentes d'Onoro—Almeida surrenders—The battle of Albuera—The first siege of Badajoz—Difficulties of Wellington—Actions at El Bodon and Aldea da Ponte.

HAVING now delivered Portugal, he began to contemplate extensive and decisive operations in Spain, provided he could obtain the sanction of his own Government, and, what was harder still, the co-operation of the Spanish generals; and he was, as usual, sanguine of success, though his labours were at this time greatly increased by the absence of some of the generals of whose skill he had the best opinion, and by the inefficiency of those whom he was forced to put in their places. Many even of the best of them seemed to think that the whole business of a campaign consisted in fighting a battle; and when there was no prospect of such an event, they became restless, and disgusted with the performance of duties which admitted of no display. Even so zealous an officer as Craufurd had pleaded private business in England, and in spite of Wellington's strongly-implied disapprobation, had returned home. The regimental officers followed the bad example of the generals, and the practice increased till at last Wellington, weary of discharging at the same time the duties of "general-in-

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"chief, general of cavalry, general of division, and some-"times, as he might have said, of colonel of a regiment," which were thrown upon him by the absence of the proper officers, begged the authorities at home to send out no one to join him who would not declare that he had no private business to recall him to England, and that he was willing to remain in the Peninsula as long as the war lasted.

As soon as Massena crossed the frontier, Wellington invested Almeida, having discovered from intercepted letters that it was too scantily supplied with provisions to be able to stand a siege; thinking it possible also that the French marshal might be induced to fight a battle on unfavourable ground for its relief. But he was far more anxious to recover Badajoz, the possession of which would enable him either to march to the relief of Cadiz, or to employ all his force for the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo, and then to penetrate into the centre of Spain, and open a communication with Valencia, without at all losing his hold of Portugal, which, he was as convinced as ever, was the only safe base for all his operations.

As his best chance of obtaining the cordial co-operation of the Spanish generals in his designs lay in a personal conference with them, he, in the middle of April, left Spencer to carry on the blockade of Almeida, and went himself to the Alentejo to open his projects to Castaños, and at the same time to examine Beresford's situation, who was encamped at Elvas, and was preparing to commence the siege of Badajoz.

The first operation of that commander had been very successful. On the 21st of March, Mortier had taken the strong fortress of Campo Mayor, in the neighbourhood of that town, and four days afterwards Beresford had surprised the French garrison, and recovered the place,

though the unskilfulness of some of his regimental officers in pursuing the retreating enemy too far caused him a heavy loss, the more vexatious because it was wholly unnecessary, as well as because it marred the completeness of the enterprise, by enabling the French artillery to be withdrawn in safety. Had Beresford then pushed forward vigorously, he might probably have recovered Badajoz also, since the breaches of that town were not yet repaired, nor were its magazines replenished; but unfortunately, in consideration of the fatigued state of some of his divisions, and of the want of some necessary supplies, he was induced to halt at Elvas till Philippon, the general to whom Soult had entrusted the threatened fortress, had put its fortifications into a state of thorough repair. It was not till the beginning of April that Beresford crossed the Guadiana, and summoned Olivenza, which held out till the 15th; nor had he commenced any active operations against Badajoz before Wellington reached his camp on the 22nd.

However, Wellington had scarcely arrived, and judging from Soult's movements that he was preparing to annoy the besiegers, had made arrangements for a battle, respecting the issue of which he expressed great confidence, when the news that Massena had again collected a strong force on the Agueda, which would enable him, if unopposed, to annoy the troops besieging Almeida, recalled him in haste to that quarter. On his return he found that Massena had received very strong reinforcements, which Bessières had brought in person to his aid, and which raised the effective strength of the French to 40,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, with 30 guns; while that under his own command did not exceed 3,200 infantry and 1,200 cavalry, though in artillery it was

rather the stronger: but in spite of this disparity of numbers, Wellington resolved not to shrink from a battle if the French marshal should attack him. The Agueda was not yet fordable for infantry, so that for a few days the two armies remained inactive; but on the 2nd of May the river began to fall, and the French issued forth from Ciudad Rodrigo, and crossed the Agueda, in the hope of at last gaining an advantage over their hitherto victorious enemies. On that day they met with no opposition, but on the next they came in sight of the British army, which its general had concentrated at a village called Fuentes d'Onoro, on the small river Dos Casas; and a severe skirmish ensued, which terminated in the repulse of the French, and in the village being left in our possession. On the 4th, Massena showed that he was preparing to make a more serious attack; and Wellington, leaving three regiments to hold the village for a time, withdrew the main body of his army to a range of heights behind the river, which, flowing through a steep ravine, protected the left of the position, though as the ground became more level a mile or two above the village, it afforded no obstacle to an attack on our right flank; and this wing, accordingly, Massena resolved to assail at daybreak the next day with his whole army. The British general had anticipated this movement, and in order to render it less formidable had occupied a hill which rose a small distance beyond his extreme right, with a small force of guerrillas under Julian Sanchez, and one of his own divisions under General Houston.

On the morning of the 5th, the enemy advanced as had been expected, and as the Portuguese behaved with less firmness than usual, soon obliged Houston to fall back; nor, though the light division led by Craufurd

and the cavalry under General Charles Stewart, who gained high distinction by his personal valour and prowess on this occasion, made a gallant attempt to support him could our position be maintained in that quarter. But Wellington, with great readiness, made a fresh disposition, withdrawing the light division to the heights, and Houston's battalions behind the river Turones, which those heights almost joined (there being scarcely a mile at this point between the Dos Casas and that stream), and on this favourable ground he renewed the battle with great vigour; while at the same time he sent a strong force across the Dos Casas to support the regiments, which, though they were greatly outnumbered by their assailants, and had lost some prisoners, still held Fuentes d'Onoro with unconquerable firmness, and kept possession of it till the darkness of evening put an end to the conflict.

Our loss had been heavy, amounting to above 1,500 men, of whom 300 were prisoners: that of the French was more severe still, and the next day they retired, having wholly failed in their object of saving Almeida. Wellington's generalship in this battle has been severely criticised by the eloquent historian of the war; and he himself afterwards considered that he had committed great faults in his original arrangements for it, especially in yielding so far to the suggestions of others as to extend his right too much, though Massena, by his indecision during the action, gave him time to repair his mistakes, and to change his front in time to prevent any evil consequences.* He had a narrow escape of being taken himself, as he was mounted on a slow horse, and at one period while he was in the plain conducting the arrangements necessary to take up his new position, the

* See Larpent's 'Diary,' i., 105, 108, 145.

portions of the two armies which were engaged in that part of the field were entangled in apparently inextricable confusion, himself, his staff, English dragoons, and French dragoons, all galloping together in one direction across the plain.

The repulse of the French rendered the preservation of Almeida by them hopeless; and Wellington entertained no doubt of compelling its garrison to a speedy surrender, when his hopes were to a certain extent disconcerted by the carelessness and inefficiency of some of his subordinate generals, who, neglecting his orders and the precautions which he enjoined, permitted General Brennier, the gallant and skilful governor of the fortress, to ruin the fortifications and carry off the garrison in safety; and then endeavouring, when too late, to retrieve their error, allowed some regiments to pursue the retreating enemy so inconsiderately as to involve themselves in a conflict with an entire division of the French, in which they sustained some loss. Wellington was exceedingly indignant at this, which he termed "the most disgraceful "military event that had yet occurred to us;" and in a severe letter which he circulated among the generals commanding divisions, and through them among the officers of the army in general, he admonished them all "seriously to reflect upon the duties which they had to "perform before the enemy, who, they might depend on "it, were not less prudent than they were powerful;" warning them especially against the habit in which the regimental officers were too prone to indulge, of leading their men "beyond the point to which they were "ordered, and beyond all bounds," so that they often "incurred the risk of becoming prisoners to the enemy "whom they had before beaten," and enjoining them to cultivate especially "a cool, discriminating judgment in

"action," which would alone "enable them to act with "such vigour and decision as to cause their soldiers to "look up to them with confidence;" adding, with caustic sarcasm, that "notwithstanding what had been printed "in gazettes and newspapers, he had never seen small "bodies of men, unsupported, successfully opposed to "large; nor had the experience of any officer realized "the stories which all have read, of whole armies being "put to flight by a handful of light infantry or dra-"goons." In his despatch to the Ministry, he expressed some regret at not having in person superintended the operations for preventing the escape of the garrison; but excused himself as having been hard at work the whole day in another direction; and though he forbore to name any officer as particularly blamable for his disappointment, he justly complained that "two divisions "and a brigade," to whom he entrusted the task, had "been unable to prevent the escape of 1,400 men;" and that "he was himself obliged to be everywhere, for that "whenever he was absent from any operation, something "went wrong."

Certainly no commander's glory was ever more completely all his own than Wellington's; for, without denying their personal intrepidity, it must be allowed that none ever had a more inefficient staff than, at the beginning of this war, the officers of the British army in general proved themselves to be. Some of them, such as Spencer, Beresford, Cole, and Craufurd, were men of considerable ability as well as courage, but still with the single exception of Hill, there was not one general whom he could implicitly trust for a discerning and judicious obedience. If before he terminated his share of the war in the Peninsula by the invasion of France his condition in this respect was greatly im-

proved, it was to his own lessons and his own example that the improvement was owing, as Sir John Hope was the only general of high distinction serving under him at that time who had not been formed in his school; a school which, as Lord Lansdowne subsequently declared, in a prediction singularly fulfilled by the event, was training a race of champions and defenders for a future generation of his countrymen.

The retreat of Massena after the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro, and the fall of Almeida, left Wellington at liberty again to turn his attention to Badajoz; but even if he should succeed in his intended attempt on that fortress, he did not anticipate that such success (though it would tend greatly to the security of the Portuguese provinces on the left of the Tagus) would enable him by any direct operations at all to shake the hold on the south of Spain which the French had acquired; and he rather proposed, if Badajoz should fall, to proceed from thence to secure Beira and the northern districts of Portugal by attacking Ciudad Rodrigo, thus foreshadowing the achievements which he executed so gloriously in the subsequent year. He therefore proceeded to join Beresford, who was becoming very uneasy at the approach of Soult, who as soon as he heard of the danger of Badajoz hastened to relieve it. Beresford, with great judgment, raised the siege, and posted his whole army at Albuera, to encounter the French in their advance, and on the 16th, one of the most sanguinary battles of modern times, in proportion to the numbers of the armies engaged, took place. Beresford had 7,000 British and Portuguese, and 25,000 Spanish troops. Soult had not above 23,000 men, but was very superior to the British commander in artillery, and had also double his number of cavalry. Beresford displayed the intrepidity and prowess of a paladin of old, though there

have been critics who have attributed to him a want of skill in some of his arrangements. Wellington himself appears to have formed a more favourable opinion of them: at all events, the resolution of the British regiments, never paralleled even by themselves till the equally stern and more momentous day of Waterloo, brought him off victorious from the struggle, and after a fearful carnage had been sustained by both sides, compelled Soult to retire from the field. The Spanish troops had behaved with unusual steadiness under fire, but proved wholly incapable of executing any evolutions. Had it been possible to manœuvre them, Wellington considered that the victory would have been complete and decisive; as it was, it left the victors no trophy save the possession of the field of battle and the glory of keeping it after so tremendous a conflict.

Wellington did not join Beresford till some days after the battle, and found that he had recommenced the siege of Badajoz, a measure which was quite in accordance with his own intentions, though he was far from sanguine as to the result, since our troops were as yet wholly unaccustomed to sieges, and all our equipments for operations of that kind were in the most inefficient state that could be conceived. He was forced to use Portuguese artillery, which he obtained from Elvas, and some of the guns were above 150 years old; nor did the balls fit them. Moreover, he calculated that Soult would soon receive reinforcements which would make his numbers far superior to any that we could employ on the southern side of the Tagus, and that he would avail himself of such superiority to renew his endeavours to save so important a place; while Marshal Marmont, who had just succeeded Massena in the command of the army of Portugal, might be expected to take dangerous advantage of any lengthened absence on his own part

from the main army, or perhaps to combine with Soult in an attempt to retrieve the defeat of Albuera by a united advance against the victorious allies. In the mean time he employed himself busily in reorganizing the army, as was necessary after a battle from which only 1,500 British soldiers had come forth unhurt, and in making arrangements for the care of his own wounded men, and also of several hundred French soldiers in a similar condition whom Soult had left behind, trusting to his often-tried humanity and generosity.

Not the least anxious and painful part of his duty was that of communicating to the relatives of officers who served under him the bereavements which the chances of war had inflicted on them. Nor does anything more clearly show the innate humanity and kindness of his disposition than the manner in which he discharged this trying task. At a later period it was the fashion with one class of writers, whom the rancour of political antagonism, united with a jealousy of pre-eminent merit, prompted to attack him with unwearied disparagement, to represent him as a man of a hard heart, wholly indifferent to the claims or to the sufferings of those whose exertions had raised himself to greatness; and others, though actuated by less unworthy motives, imputed to him an opinion that nothing which a soldier could do or suffer could exceed the requirements of his duty, for the performance of which he was entitled to neither reward nor thanks, nor even to commiseration. But many of the letters which are contained in his published correspondence prove the entire erroneousness of such a belief, nor is it possible to exceed the feeling good taste with which, in announcing to a parent the death of his son,*

* See, for instance, his letter to General Cameron, Dispatches, vii., 544, and those on the death of Colonel Barclay, and on the circumstances of his family, *ib.*, 571.

he seeks to impart to him whom his letter was to plunge into mourning all the comfort that could be derived from his own ample recognition of the merits of the dead, from the respect in which he was held by his comrades, and from "the honourable circumstances "attending his death." Nor again, the active benevolence with which, when, in addition to other griefs, the loss of one who had been the head of his family was likely to cause them pecuniary difficulty, he unhesitatingly travelled beyond his strict province, and applied to the Prime Minister himself, imploring him to use the means, which were at his disposal alone, to alleviate that part of the calamities of the widow and the orphan.

He was still labouring under great difficulties from the continued and increasing imbecility of the Portuguese Government. Their troops had now acquired such a degree of disciplined steadiness that "he could manœuvre "them under fire as well as our own," but it seemed that in proportion as the soldiers improved the governing authorities became worse. They took no care to keep under arms anything like the number of men who ought to have been serving: indeed, at this moment there were not 20,000 Portuguese troops in the field, and yet, small as this force was, they were unable to supply it with either food, ammunition, or pay, and on more than one occasion their regiments must have disbanded or starved had they not been fed from the British magazines. Nor, though thus destitute of means, would they adopt any of the reforms which he recommended for the purpose of raising a revenue; but influenced solely by "a "desire to acquire and retain a low vulgar popularity," they abstained from demanding any sacrifices from the people, and preferred occupying themselves with drawing up "long papers, which they called *documents*, but which

"contained not one syllable of truth," professing to give lists of troops, which had no real existence, and accounts of the liberality with which they had been supplied, which was equally imaginary. Again did Wellington make vigorous representations on the subject, backing them with an ample supply of present aid, but declaring that his power to give such aid must soon cease, and warning them again that if they did not speedily "alter "their whole system of government, the increase of the "enemy's force in the Peninsula might create a danger "for the country in which it might not be expedient "that His Majesty's troops should participate." Above all other causes to move his indignation was their treatment of his wounded men, for whom they refused him the proper accommodation till he threatened to make a formal complaint of their conduct to his own Sovereign.

Nor was he free from vexation caused by the weakness of his own Government: that weakness had been increased by the recent establishment of the Regency, since the Regent was known to regard the leaders of the Opposition with greater favour, and was expected to place them in power as soon as the temporary restrictions on his authority should have expired. The precariousness of the ministers' position naturally produced a corresponding vacillation in their views; and in the uncertainty of their own plans they began to listen to all kinds of unreasonable or inexpedient suggestions from others, proposing impracticable operations and diversions in quarters too remote to have the slightest effect: nor was even so experienced and practical a judge of war as Lord Wellesley exempt from the contagion; but he too suggested plans of his own, and instructed his brother Henry, who, as has been said

before, had succeeded him as Envoy to the Spanish Government, to make demands upon them which, if that prudent minister had not, after consulting with Wellington, declined to put them forth, would have greatly alienated the Spaniards from us without succeeding in the object desired; for Lord Wellesley wished the Envoy to insist upon the command of all the Spanish armies being at once entrusted to Wellington, a measure which, though if adopted by the Spaniards of their own accord it might have been productive of good, as it subsequently was, could hardly be so when extorted by a peremptory requisition, and which, if refused, as Wellington doubted not that it would be, must inevitably have had the effect of putting both himself and the British Ministry in a very difficult position. It was plain that he was still in the state in which he had been all the preceding winter, when, to quote his own language, what with the constant opposition of the Portuguese civil authorities to his measures, and the vacillation of sentiment among "the people in England, "who were changing their opinions almost with the "wind, he had not much to look to except himself;" and when "nothing but the greatest firmness" (his own expression was "something worse than firmness) could "have carried him through nine months of discussion "with these contending opinions."

His doubts of success in the attempt upon Badajoz were destined to be realized. So bad was his artillery that nine days of constant firing upon the castle wall failed to effect a practicable breach; and though our troops displayed the most brilliant gallantry in two successive endeavours to escalade San Christoval, an important outwork on the opposite side of the Guadiana to the main town, they were successfully repelled by the

garrison; while despatches of the French marshals, which were intercepted, showed that they were preparing to collect both their armies for a combined movement against the besiegers. At the same time Wellington found that his ammunition was getting low, and he had no means of replacing what he had expended except by reducing the magazines at Elvas to a dangerous extent. Accordingly, on the 10th of June, he raised the siege, though, having certain information that the garrison would soon be destitute of provisions, he maintained a blockade of the place with one division for a few days longer, till hearing that Marmont's advanced guard had reached Truxillo, a town about half way between the Tagus and the Guadiana, he raised the blockade also, and crossing the Guadiana, encamped in a strong position on the Caya, intending however to avoid fighting a battle, as the French army exceeded his by above 10,000 men, and was especially superior in cavalry, for whose operations the district was particularly favourable.

At the same time, so important was the preservation of Elvas, that he thought it possible that he might be forced to change his intention; but he had selected his position with such judgment and skill that the French marshals were unable to examine it, or to ascertain the amount of his force, and consequently d not venture to attack him.

Meanwhile, he ordered Beresford to adopt all practicable measures to put that fortress in a state of defence, though quite aware that its chief weakness would arise from the want of supplies of food and ammunition, which its own Government would neglect to furnish, while our commissariat was only able to give it temporary assistance. And while all his measures for the supply of the place were further impeded by the long-standing

animosity of the Spaniards towards the Portuguese, which made them unwilling to aid in the conveyance of anything intended for the use of a people whom they still persisted absurdly in considering as revolted subjects, and to insure whose subjection some of the Spanish ministers would willingly have given the Spanish provinces to the north of the Ebro to Napoleon in exchange for Portugal; while on the other hand, the Portuguese were desirous of obtaining from us some of the Spanish fortresses on the frontier as we retook them from the French.

Yet amid all these irritating and discouraging circumstances, Wellington's confidence in the ultimate issue of the war never wavered. To less penetrating observers, Napoleon's good fortune seemed more firmly established than ever. He had succeeded in pacifying Joseph, who had lately quitted Spain and had repaired to Paris with the wish of resigning his crown, and in persuading him to return and resume his authority, while his own throne appeared to be secured by the birth of a son, whose succession would naturally become an object of interest to the Austrian emperor as well as to himself. Yet beneath this outward prosperity, Wellington alone perceived that all was hollow; and, when forwarding some intercepted letters to the Secretary of State, pointed out to him that they contained ample indications that the French emperor's "tyrannical temper "would at no distant period deprive him of the ad- "vantages which he looked for from the Austrian "alliance," and he at the same time foresaw the speedy termination of his league with Russia. He pronounced also that the French emperor had committed a fatal error, which indeed was countenanced by the aspect of the world in general, in under-estimating the difficulty of

the Peninsular war; that though "he had made gigantic "efforts, he had not done enough," and that "he never "would be able to maintain in the Peninsula a force "large enough to subjugate it as long as the allies could "keep on foot one single army strong enough to arrest "his progress." He saw his own difficulties clearly, that "now, for the third time in less than two years, he "had the whole disposable force of the enemy combined "against him," while the Spanish armies were so inefficient, and their generals so incapable, that they were unable to take any advantage of the retirement of the French from the other provinces; but still, though admitting that he had need "of patience, of great "patience," he trusted to the effect of "time, which "would give the Spaniards experience, generals, and "armies," and till that time should come, he made no doubt of being able to avoid any important disaster.

Early in July, Soult and Marmont separated, the former moving towards Andalusia and the latter to the banks of the Tagus, where he proposed to devote a few weeks to recruiting the strength and improving the discipline of his army, while he awaited the arrival of such reinforcements and supplies from France as would, in his opinion, enable him to recommence active operations with irresistible effect.* About the same time Wellington received some important reinforcements, and what he valued highly, the aid of General Graham, the victor of Barossa, who now came from Cadiz to join him as second in command. The force at his disposal consisted now of upwards of 50,000 British troops, a number equal, except in cavalry, to that which Marmont could oppose to him; and he began to contemplate

* See an intercepted letter from the Duc de Raguse to Berthier, quoted by Lord Londonderry, in his Narrative, c. 25.

dividing his army so as to leave Hill with a force of about 10,000 men in the Alentejo, to observe the enemy's movements in that district, and proceeding with the main body to the banks of the Coa, to lay siege to Ciudad Rodrigo; doubtful of eventual success, but influenced partly by a desire to remove his army to healthier quarters than those which the banks of the Guadiana furnish in the hot weather, and also by the fact that the mere existence of his army in that neighbourhood would compel Marmont to concentrate all his attention on the same point, and thus disable him from doing any mischief elsewhere, while there was a possibility that it might also prove a seasonable diversion to the eastern provinces, in case Napoleon should prefer reinforcing Marmont by drawing troops from thence to sending fresh regiments from France.

And those provinces had need of some relief, for Suchet and Macdonald had been making great progress in Catalonia, had taken Figueras, Tarragona, and many places of minor importance, and had spread so much consternation among the Spanish generals, that they proposed to give up all hope of saving that province, and to embark what troops they had with them, in order to transport them to some more defensible district. Wellington did not doubt that the French would soon overrun Valencia in like manner, and that their success there would insure the submission of a great proportion of the grandees, most of whom had estates in that province, the revenues from which had been their principal support since the commencement of the French invasion.

As his only chance of succeeding against Ciudad Rodrigo lay in such a rapidity of operation as should give the French no time to succour it, he conducted his

preparations for its siege with the most skilful secrecy. He had caused the channel of the Douro to be deepened as far as Lamego; and he then embarked a large battering-train which had lately arrived from England, on board vessels which were believed to be bound to Cadiz, but which when at sea shifted their precious burden on board of smaller vessels, which conveyed them to Oporto, from whence they were carried in boats up the Douro; while 5,000 bullocks were collected at Lamego to transport them over the mountains to the threatened fortress.

When a great part of these preparations was completed, Wellington found to his surprise that he had not powder enough in Portugal to commence the siege; but he was forced to send a pressing requisition to England for a fresh supply; and while he was thus reduced to inactivity, Marmont was taking measures to secure the communication on both sides of the Tagus, by repairing the bridge at Almaraz, and erecting strong forts to protect the passages across the river and over the adjacent hills. And for some weeks the hostile armies remained at a distance from each other; though during this time Wellington heard, to his great vexation, that the French had introduced large supplies of provisions into Ciudad Rodrigo, and consequently, that no immediate advantage was to be looked for from any blockade. He also learnt that the accounts brought to him by the Spaniards of the French numbers were, as usual, incorrect, and that the army of the north under Bessières was far stronger than he had supposed, and that that marshal also would move to the assistance of the fortress should it be attacked.

Nevertheless, though this intelligence increased his doubts as to the success of any present attempt upon Ciudad Rodrigo, he advanced to the banks of the Coa in

the first week in August, and began the blockade of the town; while at the same time he laid his difficulties and his views clearly before the Ministry at home, pointing out to them, that though "he had undoubtedly altered "the character of the war, which had now become to a "certain degree offensive on our part;" and though, in consequence, "the enemy were obliged to concentrate "large bodies of troops to defend their acquisitions, and "to collect magazines to support their armies, which "was quite a new era in the modern French military "system," yet that his inferiority in cavalry to the French prevented him "from taking the field on a "decidedly offensive plan." And he urged the ministers to send him as large a reinforcement of cavalry as possible, telling them that "without horse he could do "nothing in a general action" in the plains. At the same time he learnt from some intercepted letters that Napoleon had been intending to come himself to the Peninsula, and he was not sure whether he had laid aside the design, though he predicted that he would not come unless he could put himself at the head of "a most commanding force;" such as would enable him by some great success to give the world occasion to draw a favourable comparison between his operations and those of his marshals.

At the end of August he learnt, from some more intercepted despatches, that he had been correct in his anticipation that the army of the north was designed to combine with that of Marmont in an attack upon himself. And while preparing to resist them, he was again embarrassed by want of supplies, in a great measure caused by the unwillingness of the Spaniards to sell their wheat to his army, except for payment in specie, with which he was inadequately provided. The obsti-

nacy and selfishness of both the Portuguese and Spanish Governments disgusted him daily more and more; that of the Portuguese he began to suspect of treachery, and complained that a person who formed his opinion from the language and conduct of either of them would be led to fancy that they had no interest, or "only a minor "interest in carrying on the war; that we were the "principals, and that they were conferring an obligation "upon us by doing what was necessary, not only to "preserve their independence as nations, but their lives "and fortunes as individuals." And it unfortunately happened at the same time that great distress prevailed in England, caused partly by a deficient harvest, and partly by the unwise orders lately issued by the Privy Council, which threw great difficulties in the way of our commercial intercourse with America.

He with reason complained that, at a time when his military operations were quite sufficient to engross his attention, he had also the task of providing for the subsistence of his army in a great degree thrown upon his shoulders; but his inventive resources never failed him, and he now took his measures with characteristic wisdom and energy. He established a system of paper money which (such was the confidence that he everywhere inspired) the people of the country were often willing to take in payment, while they refused the bills of their own Government; and in concert with Mr. Stuart, he began to act almost as a merchant, purchasing corn in America, Egypt, and other countries where it was plentiful: and after he had thus procured a sufficient supply for his troops, selling the remainder to the people of the country.

The knowledge that he had obtained of the intended movements of the combined French armies made him

determine to confine his efforts against Ciudad Rodrigo for the present to a blockade, and to keep his battering-train in safety at a distance till a more favourable opportunity; and he prepared to retire behind the Agueda on the approach of the enemy, and there to take up a position without courting, but also without refusing a battle. But he found it at this moment less easy than usual to procure trustworthy intelligence of their plans and operations, though he heard that Marmont had received a considerable reinforcement from France, and that he was preparing to throw fresh supplies of provisions into Ciudad Rodrigo, which he himself did not expect to be able to prevent him from doing. He determined, therefore, to remain where he was, in order to see the whole strength of the enemy as speedily as possible, and he had not very long to wait.

On the 21st of September, Marmont began to advance from Salamanca with 70,000 men, and the provisions destined for Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington had with him 33,000 British soldiers and 24,000 Portuguese. On the 23rd, the French came within reach of our outposts, but it was not till the second day after this that Marmont endeavoured to take advantage of his superior numbers.

Owing to the character of the ground occupied by the army, the British position was necessarily too extensive to be very strong; but Wellington had erected some redoubts to strengthen the heights of El Bodon, on the left bank of the Agueda, which were held by the 3rd division and some squadrons of cavalry, which formed his centre; and against this post the French marshal directed a vigorous effort on the morning of the 25th. His cavalry, 6,000 strong, easily drove in the outposts of the British left wing, and proceeding along the road

which led to Fuente Guinaldo, turned the heights of El Bodon, and endangered the position of the troops which occupied them. But Wellington promptly brought up the 4th division to support them, and a violent combat ensued, in which the horsemen of both nations, and some of the British infantry regiments, displayed the most brilliant gallantry; and one of our batteries was taken and retaken. At last the French infantry approached to take a share in the conflict, and Wellington began gradually to withdraw the regiments engaged, and to retire towards Fuente Guinaldo. The hostile cavalry pursued, but our infantry formed into squares and repelled their attack, and then continuing this formation crossed the entire plain, six miles in extent, closely watched by the French cavalry, who hovered around them at a short distance, while their artillery plied them occasionally with shot and shell, but who never ventured again to come to close quarters with so well-disciplined and resolute an enemy.

Wellington retired to Fuente Guinaldo, where he had previously caused a few weak entrenchments to be thrown up, and the next day Marmont made a corresponding advance, and collected his whole army in front of our position. For a few hours, Wellington with 14,000 men braved that overpowering host, in order to give time for his more distant divisions to join him; and so skilfully did he deceive Marmont as to his numbers, that that marshal never attempted to attack him, but contented himself with a vain display of his own skill and of his soldiers' readiness in evolutions, thus letting slip an advantage which he could never recover. When, the next day, he heard the real weakness of the force which had been so long within reach of his grasp, he remembered his emperor's confidence in his

star, and exclaimed that Wellington's star was also brilliant, forgetting that in war, above all other sciences, those are the most fortunate who make their fortune for themselves; and that, among commanders in war, his star is ever the most brilliant whose skill is such that it is displayed rather than aided by its light.

By the afternoon, the light division, the safety of which would have been perilled by an earlier retreat, had arrived, and then, as the ground which he occupied was by no means strong enough to enable him to make a successful stand in the event of an attack, Wellington again withdrew to ground a few miles in his rear, where the steep banks of a little stream, called the Villa Mayor, offered a more defensible position.

So completely had he imposed upon Marmont, that, during the night of the 26th, that commander likewise began a retrograde movement, till information was brought to him that the British army was retreating, which was true, and that their divisions were still widely separated, which was less correct. He at once turned on his steps, and pressed forward in pursuit, and by ten o'clock on the 27th, was again in front of his foes. The piquets of our cavalry were in front of a small village, called Aldea da Ponte, from which the conflict which ensued has taken its name: they were easily driven in, but Wellington encountered the advancing columns of the French with his own 4th division, and drove them back again with some loss; then, assuming the offensive, he sent two regiments to recover Aldea da Ponte, the position of which was for a short time vigorously contested with alternate success to both sides, though it was finally won by our troops, who, however, evacuated it in the evening, as the whole

British army fell further back to an almost unassailable position in front of the Coa. The loss of the French in these affairs greatly exceeded ours, and Wellington was highly satisfied with the conduct of his troops in all these engagements; but Marmont, who cannot deny their courage and discipline, has severely * criticised their general's arrangement, affirming that at El Bodon, if he himself had had a division of infantry in hand, the British army would have been entirely ruined; that he did gain the advantage at Aldea da Ponte, and that it is very seldom that any army has run such great risks as the British did on that occasion. In effect, he is rather criticising his own operations than those of Wellington, since if he had had time to bring up the infantry who would have enabled him to ruin the British army at El Bodon, it was a fault in him not to have done so. But if he could not have done so without additional delay, then the hours requisite to enable him to advance his infantry would also have enabled his adversary to make corresponding dispositions to receive or to avoid their attack. The real opportunity which the French marshal threw away was on the 26th, at Fuente Guinaldo, and his failure to avail himself of that was clearly traceable to the superior firmness and address of the British general.

Marmont was prevented by want of provisions from making any further advance; and finding no encouragement in the recent partial engagements to try the result of a pitched battle with the whole of both armies, he fell back on the 28th, and shortly afterwards retired from the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo to the banks of the Tagus; while Wellington, who had anticipated

* 'Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 65, 67.

the possibility of again being driven to the lines of Torres Vedras, which, as has already been mentioned, he had greatly strengthened since the preceding winter, now finding himself in no danger of any further attack during the winter, put his army into cantonments on the banks of the Coa, fixing his own head-quarters at Freneda, and still maintaining the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo.

CHAPTER XVII.

Results of the past campaign—Ill-health of the army—Hill beats the French at Arroyo de Molino—Wellington besieges and takes Ciudad Rodrigo.

To hasty observers, the past campaign might have appeared barren and unimportant. There had been but one pitched battle—that at Albuera, which, though the allies gained the victory, was unproductive of any decisive result: while Wellington himself had, during the whole year, refrained from committing his troops to any but partial engagements, and had been disappointed in his attempt to make himself master of Badajoz. But in reality, the campaign had been greatly to his advantage: he had, though with a force always far inferior in number to that of the enemy, maintained a uniform superiority in every conflict, and had prevented them from inflicting on him the slightest disaster, while he had so occupied the attention of the French marshals on the western side of Spain, as to hinder them from progressing, or undertaking any enterprise in any other direction; and indeed, on more than one occasion, by the skill of his dispositions and the firmness of his attitude, he had prevented them from attempting to

reap advantages which were completely within their reach, had they been aware of his real weakness, or had they been possessed of a genius as penetrating and as daring as his own. He had been contented to conduct the past campaign without striking events, because his far-seeing judgment looked constantly and solely to the ultimate end of the war; and he judged that at present on his part to avoid loss was to gain; while, as regarded the enemy, for them not to advance was to recede. Time had been throughout an ally on whose aid he calculated for great eventual results: in the Peninsula it would enable the Spanish armies to acquire military experience and discipline, the want of which had hitherto made useless their courage, in which alone of warlike qualities they were not deficient; while, beyond the Peninsula, it would gradually show the tyranny of Napoleon in its true colours to all the nations in Europe, and surely, though slowly, dispose them to unite to overthrow it: it would also act forcibly on the French emperor himself, who, now that Marmont's army was no longer able to support itself from the resources of the country in which it was employed, but required the formation of regular magazines, might be expected to become impatient of the drain on his treasury which the new system would cause, and to feel inclined to abandon a war success in which could scarcely fail to appear even to his stubborn temper daily more and more problematical.

To gain time, therefore, had been Wellington's principal object during the past year, and in that he had fully succeeded. There was also another way in which the recent military operations were not without their effect in the subsequent events of the war; since, while his single failure had been caused by circumstances

beyond his control, the advantages which he had gained were evidently owing entirely to his own fertility of resource, to his great military skill, and to his united sagacity and firmness; and as such they had impressed the French officers with a very high opinion of his capacity. During the last few days of active operations, a field-officer of our army was at the French head-quarters, to which he had gone with a flag of truce; and on his return, he reported that the principal officers of the enemy entertained the highest respect for Wellington's military talents, of which they justly looked on his stand at Fuente Guinaldo, and his subsequent retreat from that post, as a most brilliant specimen;* while they felt a natural abatement of their own confidence in the result of a contest with an antagonist at once so sagacious and so prudent.

Nor was the Government of Portugal insensible of the greatness of his services; and the manner in which they evinced their appreciation of it enabled him to give another proof of his singular disinterestedness. The Prince Regent of Portugal conferred on him the title of Conde de Vimiero, and the Grand Cross of the Order of the Tower and the Sword, the most honourable order of knighthood in Portugal, with a yearly pension of nearly five thousand pounds; but Wellington, while he gratefully accepted the honours, adhered to the principle which had led him to refuse all pay as Marshal-General of the Portuguese army, and "declined the acceptance "of the pension during the continuance of the war for "the independence of the country;" thus seeking, by his own example and at his own expense, to enforce the necessity which he had so constantly "urged upon the "local Government almost with importunity of in-

* Lord Londonderry's 'Narrative,' c. 27.

"creasing the disposable revenue of the State to the "utmost, not only by augmented taxation, but also by "economy in the grant of salaries, and in every branch "of the expenditure."

For three months the British army remained in its cantonments, in the possession of almost as much tranquillity and enjoyment as if they had been in their own country. As in the preceding year, the officers shot and fished; adding to their sports by day the evening amusement of private theatricals, which were often attended by the General himself: while he and one or two of his chief officers kept packs of hounds, which met at regularly appointed fixtures, being attended by large fields of officers mounted on quadrupeds of all sizes and of every kind that could wear shoes, and clad in every variety of costume; and if the sport, strictly so called, was not such as would have found favour with a Leicestershire squire, the chase, as pursued in Portugal, was not devoid of adventures of a more diversified and equally amusing character; nor did any one ride harder after the hounds, or enter into the less legitimate diversion which was caused by the mishaps of his followers, and occasionally by his own, with a keener relish than the Commander-in-Chief himself; having, in spite of all his labours and all his cares, as yet lost but little of that sparkling cheerfulness which was remarked as so striking a feature of his character on his first arrival in India; while the common soldiers returned with alacrity to their athletic pastimes, recruiting their minds as well as their bodies by the timely relaxation thus afforded them after the tension to which both had been subjected by their incessant toil.

And they required rest, for they were in a state of health which gave their commander great uneasiness.

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Many of the regiments had borne a part in the unfortunate expedition to Walcheren, and had contracted among the marshes there a fever which seemed to have permanently injured their constitutions; so that the hospitals were full of invalids; and even of those serving in the ranks at the time of the late combats, a large proportion had but recently left them, and were rather convalescents than healthy soldiers; so that Wellington was forced to report to the Ministry at home, that well as they had behaved under fire, he had never seen them capable of bearing so little fatigue.

But of all the army, no one needed rest and relaxation so greatly as Wellington, and no one had so little. The Portuguese local authorities were as impracticable as ever, throwing difficulties in his way even in matters of such daily necessity as the conveyance of letters to the army; and at last carrying their insolence so far as to arrest persons confidentially employed in different departments of the British army, without assigning any cause for their conduct. He declared that he would not submit to such an insult, and threatened the Portuguese Regency with such energetic measures that he soon put a stop to this particular evil; but the feeling which had dictated it was not so easily eradicated, and it was, no doubt, a bitter mortification to him to see that he was still forced to be constantly on the defensive against his own allies, who ought to have felt nothing but gratitude for the unhoped-for deliverance which he was working out for them.

He was also greatly disturbed at the continued inefficiency of his own officers. Even in those who had been for a length of time serving under his orders experience had wrought but little improvement; some of the generals were so incompetent that he had recourse

to different expedients to induce them to return home; still, with his invariable consideration for everything but cowardice or insubordination, expressing his anxiety to avoid doing or saying anything which might hurt their feelings. He also complained bitterly of the almost universal professional ignorance exhibited by those who came from England either to replace those whom illness or death or promotion had removed, or in command of the fresh regiments which were sent to him as reinforcements. He declared to Hill, that "their ignorance of "their duty, and the general inattention and disobe- "dience to orders shown by many who had been long "with the army, increased the details of the duty to "such an extent as to render it almost impracticable to "carry it on; and that, owing to this disobedience and "neglect, he could depend on nothing, however well "regulated and ordered." In no matter was this inattention to orders more shown than in neglect to take timely care of those who became invalids, many of whom were lost owing to this most culpable misconduct of the regimental officers. And Wellington at last published a General Order in which he animadverted on it severely, though he forbore to name those with whom he had most reason to be displeased.

Besides his anxiety for the health and comfort of his army, as dictated by general feelings of humanity, he had especial reasons for wishing to have it in an efficient state at an early period, as he did not doubt that the French would make more vigorous exertions than ever to overwhelm him at the first return of mild weather. He expressed to one of his correspondents an opinion, which subsequent events showed to be well founded, that if the French emperor "did not remove the British "from the Peninsula, he must lower his tone with the

"world;" and a certain belief "that he would make "every effort to avoid this necessity." His own expectation was that he would not limit that effort to the land, but that he would also endeavour to bring round his fleet from the Mediterranean to make himself master of our communications by sea. And with this idea, he had already pressed the ministers greatly to reinforce our fleet in the Tagus to an extent which should disappoint any such attempt if it should be made. The autumn, however, did not pass without his striking one blow which made a great impression on both armies. Hill's division, which, as has been already mentioned, was stationed on the southern side of the Tagus, though not strong in numbers, was in a perfect state of health and efficiency. And as a French corps under General Girard, which was stationed in the neighbourhood of Caceres, was causing much embarrassment to the Spanish army under Castaños, Wellington directed Hill to drive it from that neighbourhood. Hill executed his commission with the most admirable skill and with perfect success: before he reached the vicinity of Caceres, he found that Girard had retired from that town in the direction of the Guadiana; and marching by a line parallel to that taken by the French, he on the evening of the 27th of October heard that they had halted at Arroyo de Molino, and that they were evidently ignorant of his approach, and had no idea of any enemy being in pursuit of them, except, perhaps, a Spanish division, which, if following them at all, would advance from Caceres. He at once pushed on, and by a forced march in the course of the evening reached Alcuescar, a village on the opposite side of Arroyo de Molino from Caceres, and within a league of the French position. With energy worthy of the trust reposed in him by his

commander, he allowed his troops only a brief rest, and shortly after midnight resumed his march in the hope of reaching Arroyo before daylight should again put the enemy in motion. Had the British force not been delayed by a violent storm, they would have overtaken the whole division in their beds. As it was, they did not reach the village till after one brigade had quitted it to continue its retreat. Of the rest the surprise was complete, though they were preparing to follow their comrades at an early hour. The infantry had just fallen in, the cavalry were bridling their horses, and their general himself was only waiting for his charger to commence the march, when the leading files of the British cavalry appeared at the other end of the village. The confusion of the French was augmented by the storm which still raged; and though they formed with all the quickness of practised soldiers, some of our regiments broke their squares with the bayonet, others came round the village and took them in the rear, our horse charged and separated their cavalry from their infantry, and in a few minutes the rout was complete. It was in vain that the French threw away their arms to facilitate their flight: they were pursued and overtaken. Many were slain; 1,300, including one general and several officers of high rank, were taken prisoners; while all their artillery and baggage, with a considerable sum of money which they had lately levied on the district, likewise fell into the possession of the victors, whose entire loss was only seven men killed, and about sixty wounded.

Wellington was greatly delighted at this success, and deservedly gave the greatest praise to Hill's admirable arrangements, and to the consummate skill with which he had carried them into execution; and with that anxiety to promote the interest of his deserving officers

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for which he was ever most conspicuous, he wrote to the Secretary of State, entreating, as a kindness to himself, "that some mark of the favour of the Prince Regent "might be conferred upon General Hill," urging that "he was beloved by the whole army, and that there was "no one to whom an act of grace or favour would be "received with more satisfaction."

Meanwhile Victor, though now without a chance of success, still persevered in the siege of Cadiz; and Soult, having his head-quarters at Seville, remained master of Andalusia, having a secure communication both with Marmont and King Joseph, who kept his court at Madrid under protection of the army of the centre. In the east of Spain, Suchet gave a signal defeat to the Spanish army under Blake at Saguntum, in the last week in October, crowning a successful campaign in the first month of the new year by the capture of that general and his whole army in the rich and important city of Valencia. In the north, a powerful force under Caffarelli and Dorsenne had overrun a considerable portion of the Asturias, had driven the guerrillas into the mountains of Leon, had seized some strong positions in that province also, and was threatening to renew the invasion of Galicia. The entire amount of the French troops in Spain in the year 1811 was not less than 370,000 men; and they were divided into five large armies, distinguished as those of the North, of the South, of the Centre, of Catalonia, and of Portugal; each was more powerful than the whole force at Wellington's disposal, and of them all, that of Catalonia, under Suchet, was the only one which Wellington was at liberty wholly to exclude from his consideration as being incapable of being employed against himself; and though before the end of the year he began to apprehend that

the subjugation of Valencia would leave that marshal also at liberty to combine operations with Soult, or even to support the armies of the north and of Portugal; though also the entire force at his disposal, including the Portuguese, who, as has already been mentioned, were brigaded with the British divisions, and also the few Spanish troops on whom any reliance could be placed did not amount to above 100,000 regular troops, the British general was as unshaken as ever in the confidence with which he regarded the eventual result of the war, and busied himself in preparing for the ensuing campaign, with the expectation of being able wholly to change the character of his own operations, and to assume the offensive with decisive effect. Nor, in addition to the resources of his own genius, was he without many circumstances of encouragement. His difficulties were not indeed wholly surmounted: his officers had still much to learn, and many of the generals became, as was usual at the approach of winter, impatient of a protracted absence from England, and went home; so that some of the divisions of the army were actually left without commanding officers, and others were of necessity placed under temporary commanders, though such a state of affairs was necessarily most injurious to the discipline and efficiency of the respective corps. Some also were transferred by the orders of the Government to Sicily, to strengthen Lord William Bentinck, the governor of that island, and were thus removed from a scene of action where they were greatly wanted to one where, even under a commander of far higher military capacity than Lord William, their exertions could have but little effect on the general result of the war.

The finances of Portugal likewise continued in the unsatisfactory state which had so often provoked Wel-

lington's remonstrances and complaints, and the military expenses were the very last for which the Government provided; while in them every kind of mismanagement and extravagance prevailed to such a degree that the mere pay of the non-combatants of their army cost more than the army itself. Wellington insisted that during such a crisis as the present the Portuguese Government ought first to provide for their army, and, after that had been fully done, then for the other departments of the state. But though he now addressed to them a most able paper, pointing out the facility with which, by adopting a few measures of obvious moderation and justice—such as paying a small proportion of the interest due on some of the national securities—they might raise the national credit, and provide increased means for the vigorous prosecution of the war, they were not now, more than at any previous time, inclined to take his advice, but rather acted in direct opposition to it, wishing to create a new debt before they made any provision for the payment of the old one, proposing other measures which would have had the effect of debasing the coinage most in circulation, and entertaining schemes of various kinds, some of which he pronounced "the most wild "and extravagant, the least practicable, the most unjust, "and most inconsistent with the principles of financial "policy that had ever yet come under his view," till he put a stop to many of them by threatening, if they were adopted, to refuse to receive their paper money in payment for bills upon England.

He also still at times laboured under difficulties in obtaining provisions, which influenced his operations by preventing him from employing detachments in quarters where they might have done good service, had it been possible to feed them; but the Spaniards would sell

nothing except for ready money, and when coin could be procured, which was not always the case, they demanded prices so exorbitant that, wherever it was practicable, it was far cheaper to purchase grain abroad, and to pay the expenses of both sea and land carriage, than to use that grown in the country.

But in all other respects his situation was much more encouraging than formerly; so much so, that one of Lord Temple's correspondents, who seems to have been generally well informed in the circumstances of the Peninsula, represents him as being "now, for the first "time, perfectly easy in his situation, contented, and happy." * His central position, the result of that acute judgment which from the first had discerned that the heart of Portugal was the proper base for all his operations, gave him to a certain extent the power of selecting his own antagonist from among the different French commanders. The superiority of the British navy secured the safe arrival of his supplies on the coast, and his possession of the navigable rivers facilitated their conveyance to the different divisions of his army, or to the places where, in his foresight, he desired to establish magazines; and this last advantage he was now increasing by destroying the mill-dams on the Douro, so as to render that river navigable as far as its confluence with the Agueda, in order to have water-carriage for his stores almost up to the walls of Ciudad Rodrigo, which was still the first object of his attention. He was also able now to reckon on more effectual assistance from the guerrillas, with whose leaders, by the orders of his Government, he had lately put himself in formal communication, sending them presents and letters acknowledging the value of their services, and encouraging

* 'Court of England under the Regency,' i., 151.

them to an improved system of organization and mutual co-operation. One of the most enterprising of them, Julian Sanchez, had already been of great use to him, by harassing the flanks of Marmont's and Dorsenne's armies; and in the course of October, by a well-conducted ambuscade, planned originally only with the view of capturing a large herd of cattle destined to supply the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo, he had made prisoners of the governor of that fortress and a slight escort which accompanied him, and conducted him in triumph into Wellington's camp.

The increasing probability of a war between France and Russia came likewise to Wellington's aid, partly by causing Napoleon to withdraw some of his troops from the Peninsula to strengthen the army which he was collecting with a view to his projected invasion of the north, and partly also by leading to the renewal of our commercial intercourse with the ports of the Baltic, and through them with the German markets, which replenished our treasury with specie, the scarcity of which had hitherto proved so serious an impediment to our military operations. Another thing in his favour was the constant and increasing jealousy of one another which prevailed among the French marshals, and which all of them entertained of King Joseph to such a degree that some of them appealed to Napoleon against his orders, and others positively refused obedience to them.

Nor was it a trifling matter that Marmont himself was highly dissatisfied with his command, from which he had implored to be released, complaining of the means at his disposal as inadequate to effect the objects which were expected of him, and (though this he probably abstained from alleging to his emperor) being especially discontented with Napoleon's fondness for regulating

affairs in the Peninsula* from his Parisian palace, which produced a variety of orders, some contradictory, and others impracticable, and which in his opinion greatly fettered him in the free agency which is indispensable to the prompt and vigorous conduct of military operations.

But that which above all other extraneous circumstances was contributing to facilitate Wellington's success was the misconception which Napoleon had formed of his situation and power, and that which he persisted in cherishing with respect to the capability of resistance possessed by the Spaniards themselves. He assumed it as a certain fact that the British general could not for some months be in a state to undertake active operations,† and that, as for the Spaniards themselves, he could conquer the whole nation with 30,000 men, though in reality, as Wellington observed, he was as yet far from having conquered even that part of the Peninsula of which he had military possession. One of his partisans of that nation told him more truly that one letter and one courier might be enough to subdue the Spanish Government, but that he would find 300,000 soldiers insufficient to subjugate the people; and in fact, though the Spaniards had originally felt the very highest admiration for the French emperor, their eyes had long been opened; and they now hated him and his army with an intense energy which they displayed in nothing else, murdering all the stragglers that fell into their hands, and leaving their fields uncultivated lest perchance the crops should afford a subsistence to the detested invaders of their country. The land, therefore, in many districts was a complete desert, and this state

* 'Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 10.

† Ibid, vol. iv., *passim*.

of devastation, whether caused by the cessation of cultivation, or by the ravages of the French, Wellington declared to be "our best friend," as preventing the enemy from "keeping large armies together for any operation which required time, while with small bodies of men they could do nothing," and he declared his expectation that that "would in the end bring the "contest to a conclusion."

Cheered, therefore, and assisted by this concurrence of propitious circumstances, the full force of which no one in Europe estimated so correctly as himself, the British commander, whose army had in a great degree recovered its health, began towards the end of the year to prepare for an early resumption of active operations. He had completely restored the fortifications of Almeida, which through a misapprehension of his orders, General Pack in the preceding summer had almost destroyed, and which was of great consequence to him, both as a military post and also as a place of safe deposit for many of his stores; and as soon as it was quite secure, he brought thither the battering-train which he destined for employment against Ciudad Rodrigo, which by this time was in great distress for provisions, but which, being unable to afford time for its reduction by famine, he intended to attack as soon as the weather would permit him to move, designing after he had made himself master of that fortress to proceed into Estremadura to take Badajoz also, scarcely doubting of success provided the Government at home, to whom alone he revealed his plans, would keep them secret. The French were aware of the arrival of his artillery at Almeida, but believed it to be intended only to arm that fortress; consequently it was a complete surprise to them when, on the 8th of January, 1812, the British light division

forded the Agueda and commenced the investment of Ciudad Rodrigo. The British and Portuguese army, of which it was the advanced guard, consisted of about 35,000 men, and Wellington availed himself also of the co-operation of the Spanish general, Don Carlos d'España and of the guerrilla chief, Julian Sanchez, to watch the Tormes, the river which flows by Salamanca, and to give him early intelligence of any movement of Marmont in that quarter. The garrison was not allowed much time to recover from its consternation. Wellington at once proceeded to reconnoitre the external defences of the town, which he soon perceived to have been greatly augmented by the French since they had been in possession of it by the erection of a formidable redoubt, to which they gave the name of Fort Francisco, on a commanding hill, called the Great Teson, about 600 yards from the northern wall, by fortifying three convents in the suburbs, and by strengthening the entrenchments which connected the suburbs with the town. He determined at once to make himself master of Fort Francisco, and ordered Colonel Colborne of the 52nd, to storm it at nightfall, displaying in the details of his orders his own universal fertility of resource; for the engineers were at fault, having prepared no ladders, while as no attempt was to be made to breach the redoubt it was obvious that it could only be carried by escalade.* "Have you no ladders," said the General; "they are easily got; take these waggons," pointing to some which had brought the entrenching tools from Almeida, the sides of which were made of rough but stout rails, "cut them up, and then you have plenty of "ladders ready made." No one could make difficulties under such a commander, and no one in the army was

* Larpent, iii., 5.

less inclined to make them or to see them than Colborne. As soon as the darkness set in he stormed the redoubt with great skill and resolution, and with complete success; and as soon as he had taken possession of it the engineers commenced their work. To save the troops as much as possible from the consequences of exposure to the weather, Wellington caused the operations to be carried on by each division of the army working in succession for twenty-four hours, and he himself superintended every detail. Trenches were cut, pits were dug, from which our riflemen picked off the gunners of the garrison, who having a numerous artillery and vast stores of ammunition at their command, kept up a constant and heavy fire on our workmen; and so unremitting was the energy with which all toiled under the eye of their commander, that by the night of the 13th the first parallel and three heavy batteries were completed, which opened their fire the next day, while the same night General Graham surprised the Convent of Santa Cruz, and made prisoners of the troops which formed its garrison.

The progress already made only encouraged the troops to more vigorous exertions. Our fire was scarcely interrupted by the ceaseless cannonade from the more numerous artillery of the enemy. The labours of the engineers were arrested neither by the badness of their tools nor by the severity of the frost which set in a day or two after the commencement of the siege. A second parallel was advanced to within 180 yards of the walls, and new batteries were erected, the close fire from which speedily overthrew a lofty tower, and made large breaches in the walls, and everything promised us eventual success, though the reduction of a strong fortress, according to the rules of science, is always an operation

requiring considerable time, when news was received that that time was not likely to be given us. Wellington had expected from the first that his appearance before Ciudad Rodrigo would bring back Marmont to that neighbourhood, and perhaps would also induce the commander of the French army of the north to move in the same direction, and he now received intelligence that Marmont was collecting a portion of his army at Salamanca (though he was not as yet aware of the commencement of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo), probably with an intention of approaching that town to renew its supply of provisions. Wellington had reason to think it probable that Marmont would be too strong for him to fight: should he be supported by Dorsenne it was certain that he would be so. He therefore on the 18th summoned the garrison to surrender, and on the refusal of the governor, who declared that "he and the "brave garrison which he commanded were prepared "rather to bury themselves in the ruins of a place "entrusted to them by their emperor," he resolved, though the counterscarp was not yet blown in, to storm the fortress, and on the morning of the 19th he issued his orders that "it should be carried by assault that "evening at seven o'clock."

The confidence of success evinced by such brief and determined language was not ill-calculated to secure it. The General justly placed too much reliance on his whole army to select any particular divisions for the perilous but honourable task before them, which fell to the 3rd and light division as those whose turn for daily duty it was. There were two breaches, the assault of the greater of which was to be the work of the 3rd division, consisting of the 45th, 74th, 88th, 60th, 5th, 77th, 83rd, and 94th, under General Picton, while that

of the lesser one fell to the light division, consisting of the 52nd, the 43rd, the 95th (now the rifle brigade), and two battalions of Portuguese Caçadores, under General Craufurd; and besides these two main attacks, one party was appointed to scale the castle, which was on the side of the town that looks towards the river, and General Pack, with a brigade of Portuguese, was ordered to make a false attack on the southern entrance to the town, called the Gate of Santiago. Wellington himself pointed out to the leaders of the light division the exact position of the smaller breach, and examined their arrangements; and at the appointed hour each body of assailants moved in perfect order and in silence towards its destined object. Nor was the garrison unworthy of the confidence expressed in it by its brave commander. From the British ranks there came no shot, for the leaders of the storming-parties, apprehensive above all things of their own zeal throwing their men into confusion, had forbidden them to load their muskets, choosing to trust to their bayonets alone; but from the French ramparts a mingled storm of shot and shell and grape and musket-balls poured ceaselessly upon the advancing columns. Vain, however, were all the efforts and resistance of the enemy. In every quarter the British soon obtained the mastery. Pack having converted his false attack into a real one, cut off all retreat on that side. Another party, under Colonel O'Toole, won the castle; the stormers, led by Major Ridge, of the 3rd division, and Major George Napier, of the light division (brother of the gallant officer who, with an eloquence surpassed by that of no military historian, has recorded the events of this war, and of the still more illustrious conqueror of Scinde), carried both the breaches, and pressed forward, halting not though their path lay over sharp

spikes firmly planted in the ground, and over live shells bursting every minute beneath their feet, till within half an hour of the time when the troops quitted the trenches the governor surrendered and the town was our own.

It had been an eventful night. To one man, Lieutenant Gurwood, of the 52nd, who led the forlorn hope of the light division, it brought high distinction, introducing him to the notice of Wellington, who subsequently made him his esquire as Knight of the Bath, and granted him that permission to arrange and publish his despatches, which has so identified his name with that of his great leader. But to too many others it brought wounds and death. Crawfurd, already renowned as an officer of splendid talents, though they were marred at times by waywardness and obstinacy, fell mortally wounded in the lesser breach. Mackinnon, another general of great promise, was blown up by the accidental explosion of one of the French magazines. General Vandeleur was severely wounded, as was Colonel Colborne, who was struck down by a musket-ball in the shoulder at the commencement of the assault, but who gallantly refused to retire from the field, and pressing onwards at the head of his regiment was among the first to enter the town. In that brief half-hour above 700 of the assailants were killed or wounded; but the prize was worth even that sacrifice of brave men; all the survivors of the garrison, in number above 1,500 men, had been taken prisoners, and upwards of 300 guns, with an immense quantity of ammunition and military stores (for the place had been one of Marmont's principal magazines) had gone to swell the trophies of the conqueror. And the glory of the achievement was greater than even the value of the prize. One of the strongest places in the west of Spain had been taken in

defiance of an army superior in numbers, to which its safety was an especial object, in twelve days, hardly a third of the time that the French had required for the same exploit when the place was in a far less defensible condition; and the boldness which, disregarding the usual rules of methodical science, and, directed by consummate judgment and skill, had achieved so great a success greatly increased the reputation of the General with his allies, with the enemy, and what was of equal importance to his future plans, with his own countrymen.

The Spanish Government, full of joy and momentary gratitude, showered honours upon him, making him Duke of the fortress he had so nobly won, and a grandee of the first class; the Portuguese Government made him Marquess of Torres Vedras; and his own Sovereign created him an Earl, and sent a message to Parliament to request them to confer on him an additional grant of 2,000*l.* a year; while those members of either House who had formerly disparaged his services and grudged him his reward, now vied with one another in eulogizing his merits, and raised no other objection to the proposed grant than that it was an insufficient recompense for his services, and an inadequate expression of his country's appreciation of them. One speaker alone in the House of Commons, who lived however to be ashamed of his injustice, and to feel the most cordial admiration for the object of his present attack, Sir Francis Burdett, resisted the proposed grant, declared that "it was impossible to conceive less done with such "ample means than Wellington had achieved," asserted that "any preponderating army could have taken Ciudad "Rodrigo," and contrasting his exploits with the progress of Suchet in Valencia, and his victory over Blake,

drew a comparison entirely in favour of the French general.

To Wellington himself such speakers did no injury; on the contrary, they only stimulated others to set before the House and the country a fuller detail of his merits. Mr. Perceval, who moved a vote of thanks to him for the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, pointed out that it was the "first instance in our history in which the reduction of "a town had been made the subject of particular notice." General Tarleton, who had not always been a favourable critic of his operations, "defied any one to produce an "achievement at all equal to the splendour of this." Canning reminded his hearers of his repeated acts of disinterestedness, of his having refused the large pay to which he was entitled by his military rank in Spain and Portugal, and the large pension lately offered him in the latter kingdom; while Sir Charles Burrell enlarged with well-deserved panegyric on the humanity with which in the very moment of his triumph he turned his first attention to the preservation of the lives of the defeated garrison. Indeed, on this, as on every other occasion, Wellington had shown that he fully recognized the principle so beautifully laid down by Nelson at Copenhagen, with reference to the Danish sailors, that "when "they became his prisoners, he became their protector;" * while his humanity was exhibited in a very remarkable manner even before success was secured, since he abstained from employing mortars and howitzers in the siege, thus forbearing to avail himself of one most powerful means of offence, and sparing the garrison lest he should involve the inhabitants in the same slaughter. Not one member could be found to divide with Burdett, nor would it be worth while to record the fact of one

* Southey's 'Nelson,' vol. ii., p. 205. See also above, c. xi., p. 179.

1811.
single member having raised his voice against Wellington on this occasion, were it not that it is desirable that the recollection of such conduct should be preserved, not as a memorial of individual folly, but as a warning to all to beware of indulging an excess of party spirit when they reflect on the discreditable absurdities into which it has at times betrayed even honest and able men.

The disinterestedness which Canning had eulogized in Wellington was not caused by his being as yet in particularly easy circumstances, for he wrote a letter at this time to the Duke of York's secretary, in consequence of the Duke having proposed to the Prince Regent to confer a military government on him, to which the Prince did not consent, having mistakenly inferred from a conversation with Lord Wellesley that the emolument of such a post was no object to him, and that he had other views. And in this letter he says, that "his pay "as Commander of the Forces in the Peninsula did not "defray his expenses, while he had also to maintain his "family in England," so that he "thought it probable "that he should not be richer for having served in the "Peninsula, and a military government would therefore "have been a desirable addition to his income, and a "mark of the Prince Regent's favour which he should "have been very happy to receive." But he added, and his statement is worthy of notice, as showing how strictly he adhered in his own case to the rule he at different times enunciated with respect to others, that "he had never stated to anybody a wish to have such a "government, because he made it a rule never to apply "to anybody in any manner for anything for himself, "and because he was convinced from his knowledge "of the Duke's character, and from experience, that if it "were proper for him to receive such a favour, the Duke

"would recommend him for it without any application "from himself or his friends." While he was in India, his brother Henry had remarked with surprise his extraordinary indifference to money, and though the cares of a family must now naturally have diminished that indifference, it is evident that what he chiefly regarded was the honour of receiving such an appointment as that mentioned, and his opinion always was that honours, to have the very slightest value, must be spontaneously conferred. In spite, however, of his superiority to pecuniary considerations he was compelled, soon after his occupation of Madrid, to do what with such feelings he must have found very disagreeable, namely, to apply to the Government for an increase of his pay and allowances in some shape or other, as he declared that so heavy were the expenses which he was forced to incur, that without such an addition to his means he should be ruined. He believed, he said, that there was no country in Europe in which a Commander-in-Chief was so badly paid as ours, and though this ground of just complaint was speedily removed in his case, it is not to the credit of our national arrangements that generals employed on laborious and dangerous service should ever have been forced to solicit as a favour what the Government ought to have considered it its first duty voluntarily to secure to them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Wellington prepares to besiege Badajoz—He storms it with frightful loss—He returns to the north—Hill destroys the bridge at Almaraz—Mr. Perceval is murdered.

THE capture of Ciudad Rodrigo was only the first part of a large and well-considered plan for the deliverance of Spain from the invader, and the stepping-stone to further and greater achievements. Nor was Wellington inclined to lose time; which, being always a matter of primary importance in war, was most especially such to him whose exploits at this period, owing to the number and power of the armies opposed to him, necessarily partook of the nature of surprises. His first care was to repair the fortifications of his recent acquisition, which, from reports that reached him of Marmont's assembling his army on the Tormes, he thought not unlikely to be again attacked by the French: but he soon learnt that that marshal, amazed at the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo, but not thinking himself able at present to recover it, had retired to Valladolid to rest his troops till the return of open weather, for which he judged that the British army must also wait before it could commence any serious enterprise.

Marmont was far from comprehending the energy of his antagonist. By the end of January, Wellington had restored the defences of Ciudad Rodrigo, and then, without a moment's delay, began to prepare for the more arduous exploit of reducing Badajoz, the strongest fortress between Madrid and the Atlantic; the fortifications of which his demonstrations against it in the preceding year had warned the French to strengthen by every resource of engineering science, and which was now occupied by a garrison of 5,000 picked men, under the command of General Philippon, than whom no braver or more skilful soldier could possibly have been furnished by the whole French army for so important a charge. Wellington knew the talents and resolution of the man; he anticipated also that as soon as he appeared before the town, Marmont and Soult would combine both their armies for its preservation; and therefore he again placed all his trust in the secrecy and rapidity of his operations; hoping to make himself master of it almost before either of them heard of its being in danger.

He did not design to invest it before the middle of March, since that was the season when the usual rise of the rivers would enable him to leave the district in which he now was without endangering Beira, and would also prevent the French force which was scattered over Spanish Estremadura from uniting against him; but he had commenced some of his preparations as far back as December, having even then collected pontoons at Elvas. He now, as soon as he had restored and revictualled Ciudad Rodrigo, retired to his former head-quarters at Fuente Guinaldo, intending, in order the better to conceal his object from the enemy, to remain there himself till the last moment. The battering-train destined for the siege was at Lisbon: it was now embarked on ves-

sels which stood out for sea, as if bound for Oporto; but as soon as they were out of sight of land, the guns were transferred to small vessels drawing so little water as to be able to ascend the rivers, and in them they were conveyed to the neighbourhood of Elvas. And thus in that town, which is but a very few miles distant from Badajoz, the chief part of the materials for the intended siege was collected by the end of February. But in spite of these ingenious precautions, and the secrecy respecting them preserved on this occasion, even by the natives, who in general were but too apt to divulge everything of importance which came to their knowledge, Marmont, recollecting Wellington's anxiety to obtain possession of Badajoz in the preceding year, was not without suspicions of his design, which he communicated to Napoleon, proposing to make a movement to the southward with his army, so as to be able, as soon as Wellington's plans were developed, to unite with Soult to counteract them. The Emperor's reply was a positive order to his lieutenant to remain in his present position; and he pronounced that the English would be mad if they were to march upon Badajoz while the army of Portugal continued in the district of Salamanca.

When a remonstrance was once addressed to George II. against employing Wolfe, on the ground that that great officer was certainly mad, the warlike monarch replied, that if he was, he wished his madness might be so contagious that all his army might catch it. And Wellington's madness was quite as dangerous to his enemies as that which fired the conqueror of Quebec. At the end of February, his army, with the exception of a division of the King's German Legion under General Victor Alten, which was left behind to conceal his movements as long as possible, and to protect Ciudad Rodrigo if its aid

should be wanted, broke up from its cantonments, and began its march towards the Guadiana. And on the 6th of March, he himself having previously laid before Castaños a statement of the various plans which it was possible the enemy might adopt, and of the extent to which he desired the co-operation of the Spanish troops, quitted his head-quarters, concealing the object of his departure for a day or two, by causing a report to be circulated that he was only gone to hunt on the banks of the Huelva and the Yeltes. Travelling with all speed, he reached Elvas on the 11th, where he gratified his own feelings of friendship, and encouraged his army with a contemplation of the honours bestowed by their country on its gallant soldiers, by investing General Hill with the Order of the Bath with as much pomp as circumstances would permit. And then he began to apply himself to his sterner work. He found, however, to his great disappointment, that he was not yet able to commence the investment of Badajoz, because of the unwillingness of the Portuguese, on whom he had relied for the conveyance of a great part of his stores, to furnish the required means of transport, and of the scandalous neglect of their Government, which, to save its own popularity, forbore to compel them to do so; and the consequence was, that the pontoons and other stores did not arrive on the banks of the Guadiana till the 15th. Then no further delay was allowed; and Wellington having posted Graham and Hill with 30,000 men at Almendralejos and Llerena, to cover the siege, himself with the remainder of the army, consisting of about 21,000 men, invested Badajoz on the 16th of March, having the 3rd, 4th, and light divisions of his army on the left bank of the Guadiana, and a brigade of Portuguese on the right bank. But the loss

of time which had thus been incurred had thrown back the operations till the season of the equinox which is generally rainy in that country, and which, should it prove so now, was likely greatly to embarrass them.

Badajoz stands on the left or southern bank of the Guadiana, communicating with the northern bank by a bridge situated near the western end of the town, on which bank also is a strong fort called San Christoval, which Wellington, as has been already related, had failed in two attempts to storm in the previous summer. Besides the ramparts which surrounded the town, and which were in every part strong and armed with abundant artillery, it had at the north-eastern point of the walls, close to the river, a castle built on a high and steep rock; and on the eastern side two outworks, one called San Roque, and another, of exceeding strength, named La Picurina, placed on a small hill which commanded the opposite bastions; while between these two outworks and the town ran a small stream, the Rivillas, which had been dammed up so as to inundate the adjacent ground. Opposite to the centre of the southern side rose a still larger fort, known as the Pardaleras, which was connected with the town by strong walls. Wellington had himself been reduced for two or three days to a state of inactivity, caused by a fit of sickness, which had been brought on by incessant fatigue and anxiety, and by annoyance at the scandalous conduct of the Portuguese Government. Yet so completely did he place all his faculties at all times at the service of his country, and so perfect was his power of at once turning his thoughts in any direction that might be required, that neither his illness nor his anxiety about the great enterprise which he had in hand prevented him from reading a mass of papers sent to him at this time by

Lord Melville, the President of the Board of Control, and from writing him two long letters,* containing his carefully-considered opinion on subjects of great importance relating to our Indian empire; discussing the causes of the mutiny at Vellore; the means of strengthening the Government in India for the future; intimating, with a foresight which has only been realized during the past year, that the time would certainly come when the Crown would take the exercise of the sovereignty into its own hands; and showing his own freedom from that affectation of superiority to the officers of the Company which was not uncommon in the royal army, by advocating an arrangement which should allow officers to exchange from one service into the other; contending that both services would be benefited by the possibility of employing in Europe officers who had served the Company in India: and thus anticipating a wish which was expressed in many quarters during the late Russian war. He also pressed with great earnestness the propriety of giving the Governor-General in Council the same power which on a previous occasion he had expressed a wish to see possessed by the commander of His Majesty's armies in Europe; namely, that of "promoting officers for meritorious services out "of the usual regular routine; as well as that of passing "over those guilty of misconduct."

By the 16th he was completely recovered; and having made in person a careful examination of the whole circuit of the walls, he decided on making the Picurina the object of the first attack; and, when he should be master of that fort, on battering from that eminence the opposite

* The papers sent by Lord Melville were received by him on the 10th of March, and his letters in reply are dated the 12th and 13th. Dispatches, viii., 614.

bastions, known as the Trinidad and the Santa Maria. He would have preferred assailing the western side of the town, but that operation would have required a greater number of guns than he had at his disposal. Many of those which he was forced to employ were of Russian manufacture, with a bore which did not correspond to the size of our English shot; and Admiral Berkeley, to whom he applied for the loan of some guns from his flag-ship, feared the responsibility of consenting to so unusual a request, and refused them; so that he was compelled to adopt not the best measures, but those most within the compass of his limited means.

The rainy weather set in the very next day; nevertheless under his untiring superintendence the works were carried on with great rapidity; though not without meeting with the most vigorous opposition from the undaunted garrison. Philippon was as well aware as Wellington of the necessity of gaining time, and tried every expedient to delay our progress. At one time he made a vigorous sally, in which, though his loss doubled ours, his men carried off a great quantity of our entrenching tools, which the engineers had left in the works. At another time, he erected batteries on the right bank of the Guadiana, which raked our trenches, and compelled the British general to strengthen his troops on that side of the river. Terrible storms of rain also came to his aid, filling our trenches, washing away our works, and swelling the Guadiana to such a height that the floods carried away our pontoons, broke our flying-bridges, and for a few days cut off our communication with the northern side of the river. Still, so vigorous and indefatigable was the besieging host, that on the 15th they opened a heavy fire both on the town and on the Picurina; and the same night, General

Kempt stormed that outwork with great gallantry, making prisoners of a large portion of its garrison, while those of the remainder who did not perish under our fire were drowned in the attempt to escape across the inundations of the Rivillas.

Besiegers and besieged equally saw the vast importance of the success thus achieved; but though it encouraged the former to even increased exertions, it did not abate the courage of the latter, who poured a terrible and ceaseless fire on the troops who sought to take advantage of it, by advancing their works nearer to the town. Still, in spite of all obstacles, the works of the besiegers steadily advanced, while the besieged also occupied themselves in strengthening those bastions which the capture of the Picurina pointed out as the object of their future assaults. But in spite of the fire and sallies of the garrison, the British made steady progress; and by the 6th of April, three large breaches were made in the bastions of Trinidad and Santa Maria, and in the curtain between them. And hearing that Soult was advancing with a powerful army to raise the siege, and that he had already compelled Hill and Graham to fall back, Wellington determined at once to storm the place, and issued the most minute orders for what he clearly saw would prove a most dangerous and destructive enterprise, though how dangerous and how destructive even he did not probably anticipate. In the assault, as he directed it, every division was to put forth its strength. On the extreme right of the trenches, Picton, with the 3rd division, was to scale the castle; on the extreme left, Leith, with the 5th division, which had been brought across the Guadiana to bear its share in dealing the final blow, was to make a false attack on the Pardaleras, and a real one on the western bastion

of San Vincente; between these points, the 4th division, under General Colville, and the light division, under Colonel Andrew Barnard, were to storm the breaches, while smaller detachments were appointed to attack San Roque, and to make a feint, by way of diversion, on the bridge-head on the right bank of the Guadiana, and on the fort San Christoval. It was by this multitude of attacks, and by the direction of two of them against points where no breach had been made, that the success of the enterprise was ultimately attained. No point which could possibly tend to the success of the attempt, nor the number of the ladders to be carried by each storming-party, nor of the carpenters and miners who were to attend them, nor even the caution necessary to avoid wasting the sacks of light materials intended to fill up the ditch, escaped the all-vigilant attention of the General; and in obedience to his orders, at a few minutes before ten o'clock at night the troops took up their allotted positions, and moved onwards to the assault. The hour originally fixed had been half-past seven, but it was subsequently changed to ten, in consequence of the arrangements being found to require that delay, which gave the garrison a respite, of which they availed themselves to cover the front of the breaches with harrows and loose planks set with spikes, and to fix on the summit large beams armed with double-edged sword-blades, densely packed and chained together, presenting a barrier which no strength could remove, nor any endurance penetrate.

Who after Napier shall attempt to tell how Badajoz was won; how, though death in every form that ever the science of destruction made terrible met the devoted stormers, how, in spite of the inundation which had been skilfully increased at the last moment, and of

thousands of shells that were dropped ready to explode upon their heads, and of mines that were sprung beneath their feet, and of an endless tempest of grape and musketry that poured into their faces, the storming-parties pressed forward with resolute enthusiasm till they reached the summit of the breach, there to find an equally certain but more painful death from the iron barrier of sword-blades which bristled above and below, and defied all attempts to crawl under them, to overleap them, or to batter them down? Nor at first had the assailants of the castle better fortune. From its lofty walls heavy beams, and huge stones, and bursting shells, were hurled upon those who fixed the ladders; and when the fearless assailants had mounted them and reached the top of the parapet, they were shot down or bayoneted by its defenders, and then the ladders were thrust back, and those still on them were hurled down on the raised bayonets or beneath the feet of their baffled but not despairing comrades. At last, Colonel Ridge of the 5th found a spot where the wall was lower, and where for a moment the vigilance of the garrison was less; he placed a ladder against it and himself led the way. His men eagerly followed him; soon a company stood upon the ramparts, and, though their gallant leader was slain, they pressed unfaltering on, and the castle was won. Almost at the same moment a British bugle sounded in the centre of the town, for General Walker, with the brigade of the 5th division, which had been appointed to assault St. Vincente, though at first he encountered as furious a resistance as his comrades, and lost many men, at last succeeded in finding a spot where the walls also were lower and the guards few, effected an entrance, and though he was desperately wounded himself, and though his troops

BADAJOZ.
Fort Christoval
Bridge Head
RIVER GUADIANA
Rivellin
Rivellin
CASTLE
S.t Vincente
S.t Roque
Route to Talavera
Trinidad
Santa Maria
Fort Picurina
Fort Pardaleras
Vincent Brooks Imp.
336.

were resisted vigorously by the still undaunted garrison, they at length forced their way into the great square of the town, and joyfully sounded the note of victory.

It was now midnight, and Wellington, who, posted on a small height near the Pardaleras, was receiving constant intelligence of the deadly slaughter which was thinning his ranks at the breaches, and had just directed the divisions engaged there to retire and reform for a fresh assault, when a messenger came from Picton, bringing word that he was in possession of the castle. Wellington instantly sent back orders to his successful general to maintain his position at all hazards, and when the reorganized assailants of the breaches returned to the assault, they no longer met with any resistance, for the 5th division had by this time penetrated to them from the centre of the town, taking their defenders in the rear. Philippon, who was wounded, had crossed the Guadiana to the Fort of San Christoval, and the garrison, now at last conquered, to the number of 3,800 unwounded men, laid down their arms, and the next day Philippon also surrendered.

Besides the prisoners, vast stores of artillery, ammunition, military equipments of all kinds, and provisions, fell into the hands of the conquerors; but the triumph was dearly purchased. In the nineteen days that the siege had lasted, above 1,000 men, and among them many of the noblest warriors of the whole army, had perished, and nearly 4,000 more had been wounded. Above two-thirds of the whole had fallen in the two terrible hours of the assault; and when Wellington learnt the full extent of the havoc that had that night been made among his followers and comrades, his resolute firmness for a moment gave way, and he did honour to

himself and to the dead in as generous tears as ever fell from the eyes of a conqueror.

Great was the glory of all concerned in this wondrous exploit. Never was the gallantry and intrepid devotion of all ranks so severely tried, and never were the demands made upon their courage so nobly answered as in the fearful breaches of Badajoz. But the greatest glory belonged to their commander, whose genius had conceived and whose skill had enabled them to achieve so grand a success. His army, as he complained, had been less by 20,000 men than it ought to have been for the work which it had to do; and worse than its numerical deficiency was the insufficiency of its engineering equipment, and the want of experience in its engineer officers. Yet with this inadequate instrument, and in spite of two most skilful generals at the head of forces far superior in number to his own, he had taken two most important fortresses, out-manœuvring them, and deceiving both them and their imperial master, whom no one ever excelled in the penetration with which he divined the designs of his enemies; and he had shown that the well-calculated audacity of his attack was as formidable as previously the inventive caution of his defence had been unassailable.*

Wellington's glory was great and untarnished, but it is only too true that the army, which with such

* So unequal did his means appear to his enterprise, that Soult, when he first became certain that he had marched against Badajoz, wrote to Marmont that "he was furnishing them with an opportunity of insuring fresh "triumphs, which he felt confident would be brilliant to the emperor's arms."[1] And the same marshal, writing to Berthier after its capture, excused himself for not having saved it by alleging "that it was not in human foresight to "think"[2] that with such a garrison the place could be taken in such a manner.

1 'Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 358.

2 Soult's intercepted Despatch, quoted by Napier, Appendix, iv., 580.

heroic courage had won the victory, grievously sullied their laurels by the cruelty with which they abused it; a cruelty the more inexcusable that it wreaked itself not on their enemies, but on the citizens of the captured town, the allies of whom they proclaimed themselves the champions and deliverers. A town taken by storm has rarely been treated with mercy; but on this occasion the terrible resistance with which the stormers had been met seemed to have roused their bad passions to an almost unexampled fury, and they sacked the town with the most brutal violence, often wantonly destroying what they could not appropriate, not sparing even the defenceless women, whose honour ought to have found its surest protection in their proved valour, and often turning their arms against their own officers, who tried in vain to check their brutal fury. On one occasion Wellington himself was nearly killed by a drunken soldier firing his musket over his head as a triumphant salute. He, always merciful, was shocked beyond measure at the shameful scene, and exerted himself vigorously to stop it; but it was not till he marched a strong body of fresh troops into the town, erected a gallows in the central square, and hung several of the plunderers, that he could restore order.

His first task was to repair the fortifications of the town, which, as soon as it was again rendered defensible, he was compelled to entrust to a Spanish garrison, announcing to the Spanish Government that if they would not provide for the security of the fortress he would destroy it, since his own army was not by any means strong enough in numbers to allow him to divert any portion of it from the impending operations in the field, which were becoming to him a source of much anxiety and of great disappointment.

It is wearisome to be incessantly recording the imbecility and neglect of the Peninsular governments; but no just idea can be given of the greatness of Wellington's character, and of his achievements in this war, without showing how constantly, from the time when he first set foot in the Peninsula to the day when, by crossing the French frontier, he disencumbered himself of such worthless allies, his advice and orders were neglected, his anticipations were disappointed, and his plans were baffled by such a mixture of folly and conceit, of obstinacy and vacillation, of promise and non-performance, as the history of nations can show no other example of. While the enemy were in possession of Badajoz, he was prevented from undertaking any great offensive operation in any direction, since that fortress supplied them with a firm base from which, if he had been removed to a distance, they could at all times have advanced upon Lisbon; but his recent success had removed all danger from the Portuguese capital, and had given him the initiative, an advantage of which, had his allies performed their duty, he would speedily have made a most overpowering use. He was now desirous of invading Andalusia, to put a glorious crown on his recent exploits by crushing Soult, the most formidable of all his enemies, before he could draw together a force capable of resisting him. But while he was revolving this scheme in his mind, he learnt that the Spaniards, to whom he had entrusted the task of provisioning Ciudad Rodrigo, had wholly neglected it, though he had himself given them provisions for the purpose from his own magazines, and had only required them to convey them into the town; that the gross disobedience of General Victor Alten had left the Portuguese frontier exposed; and that, taking advantage of these circumstances,

Marmont had again blockaded that fortress, had crossed the Agueda and Coa, had invaded Beira, and had begun to ravage the western side of that province with great cruelty, his soldiers robbing and murdering even the unresisting inhabitants. The advance of the French placed not only Ciudad Rodrigo, but Almeida also in great danger, so Wellington abandoned his design of moving against Soult, and leaving Hill with a moderate force in Spanish Estremadura, to watch that marshal, returned himself with all speed to confront Marmont in Beira, hoping to bring him to action while the Agueda and Coa, which had become considerably flooded since his entrance into Portugal, cut off his retreat. Fortune, however, favoured the French marshal, for the rivers fell before Wellington could reach them, and afforded the enemy a safe return into the Spanish territory.

Wellington reached Alfayates on the 24th of April, and found that Marmont had escaped him. He was forced to remain in that district till he had provisioned Ciudad Rodrigo, and had secured the safety of that town and of Almeida, the defences of which were as yet very incompletely restored; but he still hoped, when that was done, to be able to resume his plan of invading Andalusia; and partly with this view, and in order to impede the communications between Soult and Marmont, he directed Hill to march to the Tagus, to destroy a bridge of boats which the French had constructed at Almaraz, and had secured with three strong forts and a bridge-head, all well armed and strongly garrisoned. It was necessary for Hill in the first place to restore the bridge over the Guadiana at Merida, and this operation prevented him from moving till the 12th of May; but the moment that the bridge was sufficiently repaired to bear the weight of his artillery he crossed that river, and

proceeding with a secrecy and rapidity worthy of his commander, on the 16th he arrived in the neighbourhood of a strongly fortified castle on a rugged ridge, called Mirabete, which, as it commanded the only road to Almaraz, he had designed to surprise before proceeding against the bridge. Reaching Mirabete, however, in the daytime instead of by night, as he had intended, he was forced to abandon the idea of surprising it, and he was reluctant to sacrifice the lives of his men in an open attack upon a place which was of no intrinsic importance: yet a diligent search could discover no other road practicable for artillery, and at last, inspired as it were by the bold example of his chief, he adopted the audacious design of leaving his guns behind him, and of marching by mountain passes with a portion of his infantry alone to surprise and storm forts which he had originally thought a strong battering-train necessary to assail.

A favourite proverb of hardy natures and bold men declares that Fortune favours the brave; and as no braver man than Hill ever wooed her smiles, she did not now desert her favourite. On the evening of the 18th he arrived within six miles of the nearest of the forts, to which Marmont, its constructor, had given the name of Napoleon, calling the other Fort Ragusa, in honour of the title of nobility which he himself had won by his victories in the plains of Illyria. The British general marched on during the night, hoping to surprise the fort before daylight, but the hills were so steep and the paths so difficult that the whole garrison was in motion when our columns appeared in sight of the fort, which, as the governor had received news of our advance, was protected by a force of double its usual numbers. Neither daylight, however, nor their increased strength

could avail the French: the British soldiers scaled Fort Napoleon, and then turned its guns against Fort Ragusa on the other side of the river: the garrison of that fort, after interchanging a brief cannonade, were seized with a panic and fled. Both forts and the bridge were destroyed, and the victors returned to their comrades with a number of prisoners far exceeding the whole of their own loss in this brilliant exploit. Had not Sir W. Erskine, an officer whose incapacity had already marred more than one operation, brought Hill the false information that Soult had arrived in Estremadura with his whole army, Hill would have crowned his success by turning his guns against the castle of Mirabete, which, being now isolated by his previous success, must have fallen an easy prey; but the receipt of this false intelligence caused him, in obedience to the orders which Wellington had given him in anticipation of such a contingency, to return at once to the Guadiana. Wellington was greatly annoyed at Erskine's folly, which had thus spoiled the completeness of Hill's success; but he deservedly bestowed the most cordial praise on Hill's ability, and on the extreme gallantry of his troops, and anticipated great advantages to his own future movement from this achievement, which had cut off the best and shortest communication between the most powerful and most enterprising of his enemies, who had now no means of passing the Tagus lower than Toledo.

But notwithstanding the unvarying success of his military operations, his difficulties in other respects were as great as ever. The Prince Regent, indeed, of Portugal had written him a letter full of compliments, calling him the saviour of himself and of his country, and authorizing him to remove Souza from the Regency

if he chose; but Wellington greatly doubted whether, as long as the other members of the Regency continued in power, Souza's removal would not increase his influence, and therefore he forbore now to exert the authority given to him, trusting that the knowledge of his having received it might modify some of the principal evils of which he complained.

But the Spaniards were still wholly unmanageable: though (while almost invariably behaving ill in the open field) they had defended several towns with great intrepidity and skill, they yet had a general dislike to them, so much so that, as he observed, even when running away, they never fled to them for protection; and now, influenced by this feeling, they neglected his orders about restoring the fortifications of Ciudad Rodrigo, and were unwilling to garrison it, wishing rather to entrust their own fortresses to foreigners than to undertake the defence of them themselves. To their applications for a British and Portuguese garrison, Wellington gave a positive refusal, repeating his determination to destroy both that town and Badajoz if the Spaniards themselves did not secure them both to his satisfaction. At the same time, as he considered it fair that if he required of the Spanish troops the performance of military duties, they should have the advantages of military pay, he was willing to allot for that purpose a portion of the British subsidy, the distribution of which was entrusted to his brother Henry. The fact of the Spanish troops deriving their pay from us would naturally, he conceived, enable him to insist more strongly on the establishment and maintenance of proper discipline among them. It would have been, in his opinion, better that the power of aiding them in any manner, whether with money or provisions, should have been vested solely in himself as Commander-

in-Chief, since nothing seemed more desirable than to strengthen his hands in every possible way. Yet, so great, he complained, was the jealousy entertained in England of extending his authority, that he had never proposed to the Government any measure calculated to have this effect, though, if he had done so, he might, he thought, have hoped that his past conduct would have placed him above the suspicion of desiring any increase of power for selfish purposes.

Nor were his difficulties abroad counterbalanced by any alleviation of his anxieties with respect to the support and supplies which he required from home. In April, his brother the marquess, irritated at his inability to persuade his colleagues to adopt as vigorous measures for the prosecution of the war as he considered to be in their power, had resigned his office, much to Wellington's annoyance, who pronounced his brother's complaints of his colleagues unreasonable. In May, Mr. Perceval was murdered by a half-mad assassin; and the political intrigues to which this sad event gave rise, and the uncertainty that existed for some time as to the composition of the new Ministry, naturally affected the prospects of the army. Wellington's distress for money was extreme; the Americans also had laid an embargo on corn in consequence of the measures taken by us to purchase supplies in that country; and he was compelled to anticipate the possibility of distress for food, on which he declared, "that he could not reflect without "shuddering," and which might even compel the abandonment of plans which, if pursued, could not fail to be successful.

His difficulties in this way were increased by the absurd folly of Lord W. Bentinck in Sicily. Wellington, aware how inferior his army was to the combined

forces of the French, had been very desirous that a diversion should be made in his favour on the eastern coast of Spain; and with this view had proposed that Lord William should undertake an expedition to the coast of Catalonia, for which he offered to provide considerable supplies of artillery and ammunition, with a sufficient number of artillerymen, from his own army, in the hope that Lord William might be able to reduce Saragossa, and afterwards to recover Valencia, and so to stimulate the revival of the war in that province. For a moment Lord William entered warmly into the plan, but being endued with only a very scanty portion of military capacity or steadiness of purpose, he changed his mind before the expedition was ready to start, and sent to England to request permission to divert it to a descent on Italy; while full of this new scheme, he entered into negotiations with the money-dealers for specie, for which he offered a higher rate than Wellington, and thus outbid him, and crippled many of his subsequent operations, for the sake of a visionary plan which the ministers, with judgment better than his own, forbad him to carry out.

At the same time, the French marshals also were not without their difficulties: they were in great want of money and provisions; since their emperor, from his anxiety to put forth all his resources against Russia, was less disposed than ever to send them supplies;* and his system of making war support war had so exhausted the Peninsula, that they could procure no food from the country till the return of the harvest. Moreover, Wellington was fully aware of their embarrassments in these particulars, though they were far from suspecting his. His recent successes, too, had greatly crippled their

* 'Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 381.

means of offence, by depriving them of their battering-trains, and therefore of the means of besieging any places of strength. But the greatest hindrance of all to their success was the jealousy which the different marshals still entertained of each other, and which had gained strength to show itself more unrestrainedly from the absence of Napoleon from France, which he quitted at the beginning of May to commence his Russian campaign; from his consequent abdication, if it may be so termed, of his authority over his armies in Spain; and from his appointment of King Joseph to the supreme command of the French forces in that country. For Napoleon, though his obstinate and despotic temper often instigated him to direct measures from which he was too far distant to be able to judge correctly of their practicability or expediency, while it made him intolerant of advice or of remonstrance, was still a governor of such genius and vigour, that even those who were most inclined to complain of his orders could not avoid respecting and acknowledging him as their superior. But Joseph, though a far more amiable man, and one who in a more peaceful time and country might not have made a bad king, was nearly devoid of political and wholly destitute of military ability; nor had he that force of character which in some persons makes up for the want of brilliant endowments. The consequence was that the generals of the different French armies now defied his authority more openly than ever: sometimes even imputing their failures to the weakness of his government; while many of the angry letters which were written by them to one another, and by all of them to Marshal Jourdain, his major-general, fell into Wellington's hands, revealing to him not only their plans, but the expectations which they had formed of his

own, and thus giving him great facilities for baffling and misleading them.

It has been mentioned that Napoleon had withdrawn the Imperial Guard and some other regiments to form a part of his Russian army; still the French armies remaining in Spain amounted to little less than 300,000 men; and considering the intense hatred with which the people of both the Peninsular nations, and especially the peasantry, hated the French, it is remarkable that many Portuguese, and not less than 40,000 Spaniards, were still found in the ranks of the enemies and despoilers of their country. Of this gigantic force the division of Marmont, whose especial task it was to watch the British army, consisted of nearly 70,000 men, all choice soldiers, many of whom had been lately sent him as a reinforcement from France, and were therefore not exhausted by the toils and sufferings of the winter campaign.

To oppose this vast host of enemies, Wellington had an army which even on paper did not amount to one-third of their numbers, and which (since the regiments which had borne a part in the Walcheren expedition were still far from having recovered their health) was, in fact, so much reduced by sickness, that his effective British force did not exceed 32,000 men. He had also 24,000 Portuguese—good troops, and a few Spanish regiments, whose discipline and consequent efficiency was not yet equal to their courage. This army, consisting altogether of about 60,000 effective soldiers, besides the garrison of Cadiz, which now was also under his command, he divided into two parts, giving Hill the smaller division of about 20,000 men, with 24 guns, whose field of operations was the country to the south of the Tagus; and keeping the remainder, nearly 40,000

men, of whom 3,500 were cavalry, with 54 guns, under his own command; while he facilitated the junction of the two armies on either side of the Tagus by repairing the bridge at Alcantara; and the conveyance of supplies to both by carrying still further his measures for opening the Douro; and by removing the obstructions to the navigation of the Tagus which modern carelessness had permitted to accumulate, till he rendered that river also navigable to within a short distance of Alcantara.

There were also several regular Spanish armies, of which the principal was that in the south under General Ballasteros, and numerous bands of guerrillas, which weakened the enemy by the necessity for continual watchfulness in every quarter which they imposed upon him; but which, except in that way, did not strengthen Wellington, who, though careful to conciliate their chiefs by presents of arms and invariable courtesy and liberality, placed no dependence in them, and was never influenced in his plans by any reliance on their operations.

CHAPTER XIX.

Wellington marches towards Old Castile—He enters Salamanca—Takes the French forts—Marmont retreats, and Wellington pursues him towards the Douro—Marmont returns towards Salamanca—The battle of Salamanca.

THE measures necessary for the security of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida occupied him till the last week in May, when the approaching harvest, which in that country ripens early in June, might be expected, by removing for a time Marmont's difficulties for food, to enable that marshal again to move his army freely in any direction. Wellington therefore abandoned his idea of descending into Andalusia, from a conviction that Marmont would follow him thither and combine with Soult; in which case their united armies would far exceed the numbers of his own and Hill's divisions: and he determined rather to move forward into Castile, with a view to fight Marmont in a pitched battle, in which neither he himself nor a single man in the army doubted for a moment of success: while this confidence, as he truly pointed out to the ministers to whom he announced his intention, would of itself greatly contribute to insure it. The confidence which the Spaniards also reposed in him was daily increasing; and the Government at this time gave

a remarkable proof of it, by issuing an order, which, overlooking the differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics, permitted 5,000 Spaniards to enlist in the British regiments. And these feelings entertained by the allies contrasted strangely with those which filled the breast of Marmont, who, when Joseph spoke of Spain as conquered, asked sarcastically whether such a term could be applied to a country where the conquerors could obtain nothing except at the point of the bayonet; and who was evidently oppressed by a secret sense of the greater talents of his adversary, since, in spite of his own already superior numbers, he applied to the King to strengthen him with the cavalry belonging to the army of the Centre, which Joseph refused, declaring that he could not give it without dangerously weakening the capital itself; adding, that as he had provided for Marmont's being joined by Drouet's division, in the event of Wellington bringing Hill to the north of the Tagus, the Marshal had ample means, in every possible event, to fight the British army with success.*

From intelligence of different kinds which he received at the end of the first week in June, Wellington judged that Soult was moving to attack Hill, and he consequently recommended his lieutenant, if that marshal should enter Spanish Estremadura, to occupy the old position at Albuera, the strength of which would compensate for his slight inferiority in numbers, and from which he could retire in any direction that might be necessary to protect either Badajoz or the frontier of Portugal in the event of the enemy's movements menacing either of those objects. In fact, he considered Hill stronger in proportion to the foes opposed to him

* 'Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 398.

than he was himself: for he had scarcely reached the Agueda, in his forward march, when, from intercepted despatches, he learnt that Marmont's army was far more numerous than he had believed it to be; nevertheless he continued his advance; crossing the Agueda on the 13th of June, in the expectation that, if the Marshal should collect all his troops together in order to resist him, that step would afford the guerrillas and the Spanish army in the north an opportunity of cutting off all his communications, for the safety of which Marmont was more solicitous than some of the other generals of the enemy: while if, on the other hand, he should detach any divisions from his army to prevent this evil, the British force would then be superior in number to that which he retained with him.

The French retired at Wellington's approach, evacuating Salamanca on the night of the 16th, with the exception of some forts which they had recently erected on the ruins of some colleges and convents which they had demolished, in which they left a garrison of 1,800 men. The next day Wellington crossed the Tormes, and on the 17th entered Salamanca, where he was received with the greatest exultation by the citizens, who had now for three long years been groaning under the oppression of the French, who had taken a wanton pleasure in the destruction of most of the public buildings and colleges which formed the principal boast of a city which had long been the most celebrated seat of learning in Spain. Without a moment's delay, he proceeded to invest the forts which were so strong, being three in number, each supporting the other, well garrisoned and fully armed with heavy batteries, that Marmont calculated that they could hold out for more than a fortnight, within which time he hoped to find some means of re-

lieving them. Wellington had under-estimated their strength: a battery was erected, which opened its fire on the 19th; but our guns proved bad, and had produced scarcely any effect when their ammunition was exhausted. It was necessary to wait till fresh supplies could be procured from Almeida, and in the mean time fresh batteries were constructed; but before the means of employing them could arrive, Marmont, who had been urged by Joseph to attack Wellington, and who was himself very anxious to save the forts, returned on the 20th to the front of the British army with 25,000 men, hoping to tempt Wellington to an action, which that general declined. The next day, the arrival of three more divisions and a brigade of cavalry raised the French force to 40,000 men; and Marmont, becoming still more eager for a battle, seized a post of some importance on our right flank; but Wellington contented himself with ordering Graham to dispossess him of it, which was immediately done in sight of both armies; and Marmont, retiring a little, took up a fresh position, which he hoped, even without a battle, would enable him to communicate with the forts.

Wellington was determined not to attack him till he should be master of the forts, as there was not sufficient difference between the strength of the two armies to make any very decisive advantage probable; while, in the event of any failure, the forts, as they commanded the bridge of Salamanca, would have made a retreat over the Tormes difficult; and he again contented himself with counteracting Marmont's last operation by a corresponding movement of his own, extending his troops so as to cover Salamanca completely, and yet preserving the power to concentrate them on any point at very short notice. His skill was on this occa-

sion admirably seconded by the intelligence of his subordinate officers and the quickness of his men. On the 24th, a strong division of the French crossed the Tormes with the apparent intention of advancing to the attack; but General Bock, at the head of a brigade of heavy Hanoverian dragoons, delayed their progress with great skill, thus securing Wellington time to make all the dispositions necessary to receive them: as they advanced further, they perceived Graham, with numbers equal to their own, in their front, and Wellington with the rest of his army so disposed as to be able to fall either upon them or upon their comrades who were not as yet in motion, on which they repassed the river, and made no further attempt to court an engagement with an enemy whom it was impossible to surprise or to outmanœuvre, while the experience of many a previous day proved that there was little advantage to be gained over British troops by mere hard fighting.

Two days afterwards the expected ammunition arrived from Almeida, and the batteries reopened their fire with such precision and effect that early on the 27th one of the forts was set on fire, and a large breach was made in a second. The commanders offered to capitulate, demanding at the same time three hours to arrange the terms of surrender. Wellington, suspecting that they only sought time to extinguish the fire and to repair the breach, required them to surrender in five minutes; and as they did not comply, he renewed his fire, stormed one fort, carried another by escalade, and the third surrendered: their garrisons became prisoners of war; 30 guns and large stores of provisions, clothing, and military supplies of every description also fell into his hands; and what was still more important, he was now master of a secure passage over the Tormes, the value of which, as affecting

his plans for subsequent operations, could hardly be overrated. Again his rapidity had baffled the calculations of his enemies; for Marmont had resolved to attack him in a pitched battle the very next day, in the hope of saving the forts, or of at least giving the garrisons an opportunity to escape during the conflict. He had reckoned that they would be able to hold out fifteen days; but if the six days during which Wellington was waiting for ammunition be deducted from the time which he spent in front of them, they were reduced in less than five; and the British general affirmed that he could have taken them in still less time had he been able to turn his own chief attention to the operations of the siege, instead of to the manœuvres of Marmont's army. Yet so perfect was his command at all times of all his faculties, and so rigid his adherence to his rule of attending to everything the moment it was brought before him, that on one of these days, while the enemy were actually manœuvring in his sight, having received a letter from Mr. Stuart on the subject of Portuguese finance, and the idea entertained by some of the members of the Portuguese Government of establishing a Bank of Portugal on the principle of the Bank of England, he at once sat down and drew up an elaborate paper on the subject, remarking incidentally that his own situation, and therefore the situation of Portugal, was as yet far from secure, since the two armies to which he and Hill were opposed were exactly double the strength of the British and Portuguese force; and then, after entering into consideration of many of the proposed details, and pointing out insuperable objections to some on the ground of extravagance, and to others on the score of impracticability, he availed himself of the opportunity afforded him by the present discussion again to urge on the

Portuguese Government, the great principle, not yet very fully understood in the Peninsula, that "when a nation "is desirous of establishing public credit, or, in other "words, of inducing individuals to confide their property "to its government, they must begin by acquiring a "revenue equal to their fixed expenditure, and they "must manifest an inclination to be honest by per- "forming their engagements in respect to their debts." He reminded them that his having "forced them to pay "the interest on the paper money in circulation had, in "spite of their jobbing, produced a most material effect "in restoring the credit of their paper money." He recommended to their consideration the "calculations "made in England regarding the comparative value of "bank-notes and of gold and silver, and the infinite "superiority, as a security, of the English bank-note to "Portuguese paper money." He pointed out to them that this inferiority in the value of Portuguese notes enabled "the *sharks* in Lisbon," among whom he included many of his own countrymen, to traffic in them, "and make a great deal of money at the expense of the "public." He represented, independently of the discreditable character of such a scheme, the extreme fallacy of supposing that their revenue could be benefited by maintaining a coinage the real value of which was inferior to its nominal value, since sellers who were to be paid in such coin would protect themselves by raising the price of the articles in which they dealt; and telling them that "he did not ask for new taxes; that, on the "contrary, he would repeal many; but that he did want "a real and fair collection of those which should be "allowed to exist;" he ended by repeating his often urged opinion that "the only measure which could "relieve them from their financial difficulties was to

" discontinue their useless expenses and establishments,
" and to set to work in earnest to reform the gross abuses
" which existed in the collection of their revenue."

Portions of this advice were at the time not inapplicable to his own country; and the general principles which he thus laid down are the foundation of all private as well as of all public credit, so that it is not pretended that there is any originality in the views propounded in this letter; but it yet may well excite our surprise and our admiration of the variety of Wellington's talents to find him, who at that time had spent nearly all his life in camps and in the active operations of war, manifesting so sound a comprehension of the leading principles of financial wisdom, and laying them down with such terse perspicuity that it would be difficult to improve either upon his ideas or upon his language.

When Marmont found that the forts had fallen, he laid aside his intention of fighting, and retreated towards the Douro, on the northern bank of which river he designed to take up a position at Tordesillas; and Wellington, having destroyed the forts, and also some works which the French had thrown up at Alba de Tormes, a few miles above Salamanca, and having placed a Spanish garrison in the castle of that town, followed him, and on the 2nd of July overtook his rear-guard on the banks of the Douro, and took several prisoners. Having, by a false report that they had destroyed the bridge of Tordesillas, been led to infer that the main body had crossed the river, he was too late seriously to molest their passage; and Marmont halted in the position which he had previously intended to take; while Wellington rested on the left bank of the Douro, waiting to discover the precise situation of some fords, and also till the river, which was high at the moment, should fall so as to make

them practicable. Marmont had broken all the bridges above Tordesillas, and his possession of that at that town, the only one which he had left uninjured, made his position very strong; and for several days the two armies remained quiet, separated by the river, but so near one another that the soldiers of each conversed across the stream, occasionally crossing it to hold friendly intercourse with those to whom they so recently had been, and were so soon again to be opposed in deadly strife. Neither general was inclined to attack without the prospect of some decided advantage, and both were waiting for reinforcements: Wellington hoping to be joined by a detachment from Hill's force, and by a strong body of recruits and convalescents; and Marmont, who since his departure from the Tormes had been already strengthened by one division under General Bonnet, expecting others from the armies of the north and of the centre, which he had earnestly entreated General Caffarelli and the King to afford him.

Both generals were doomed to disappointments: at the end of the second week in July, Wellington heard that Lord William Bentinck, for the sake of making a purposeless descent upon some part of Italy, though he had no particular notion where, had renounced the plan of operations which he himself had proposed to him in the Peninsula, where the mere appearance of his force would have had a good effect; and Marmont, instead of the aid which he had besought the King to send him, received only a letter of rebuke, and an assurance that, considering the small proportion of British troops in Wellington's army, he was quite strong enough to beat the allies with the forces which he already had with him;* he also found that the army of the North could

* 'Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 122.

promise him but a small detachment, though Caffarelli did eventually contrive to send him a body of 2,000 cavalry, which, however, did not reach him till after the battle of Salamanca. At the same time, Astorga, which a Spanish army under General Santocildes was besieging, required his aid; but he could not safely weaken his army to afford it till he had driven the allies from the Douro; and as he was now sure that delay would not make him stronger, while it might enable Hill to join Wellington,* he determined on commencing offensive operations against the British general, in the hope either of defeating him, or of perhaps, without risking a battle, compelling him to retreat into Portugal. Accordingly, having repaired the bridge at Toro, a town several miles below Tordesillas, and having marched and countermarched his troops, crossing and recrossing the Douro at Toro, in order to conceal from Wellington his intended line of advance, on the 16th he led his whole army across the bridge at Tordesillas, and on the evening of the 17th, by a forced march of extraordinary rapidity, reached Nava del Rey.

As he had possession of all the bridges and of most of the fords, Wellington had been unable to prevent his passage of the river, and now being of opinion that it was not for his own interest to fight a battle except under the most favourable circumstances, he fell back in a leisurely manner towards Salamanca, guiding his movements by those of the French; getting the better of them in one or two skirmishes, in one of which he took 240 prisoners, till on the 20th, after the two armies had been marching all day in parallel lines within musket-shot of one another, without either being able to find any opportunity of striking a blow, so admirable

* Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,' iv., 123, 124.

was the skill with which they both were directed, he reached Cabrerizos, a village on the right bank of the Tormes, a very short distance above Salamanca, and the next day he concentrated his whole army on the Tormes, which Marmont also began to approach at Huerta, a mile or two higher up the stream.

The two armies were as nearly as possible equal in numbers, each having about 45,000 men. The allies were slightly superior in cavalry, and the French considerably stronger in artillery; so that, as a battle without decisive victory would still have been unfavourable to Wellington, by disabling him from remaining in Castile (since, supposing both armies to be equally weakened by the action, the reinforcements which he knew that Marmont had expected, and of which one had already reached the Douro, would repair his loss, while he himself had no such resource to turn to), he still resolved to avoid a battle if possible, though equally determined to make every effort to preserve his communications with Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo, to cut off which was evidently the principal object of Marmont's operations.

The French marshal had conducted all his movements with the most brilliant skill, and having had, from the nature of the ground, the initiative throughout, had outflanked the British force, and had gained the command of the ford at Huerta, which enabled him to pass the Tormes at his pleasure. He had also obtained an advantage which Wellington never suspected, for finding that the Spanish general, Carlos d'España, had withdrawn the garrison from the castle of Alba de Tormes, he had occupied it with a sufficient force of his own, and by this piece of unexpected good fortune subsequently saved his army. Wellington resolved, if Marmont should cross the Tormes,

to cross it also himself, but he began more and more to doubt his ability to hold his ground without a battle which he was still resolved not to risk unless some unexpected opportunity of striking an important blow should present itself; and he now wrote to Castaños to inform him of the probability of his being forced to retire to the frontier; but his letter fell into Marmont's hands, whom it filled with a premature and shortlived exultation.

The opportunity for which the British general had waited so patiently was at hand. The night of the 21st heralded the coming conflict with a fearful thunder-storm, so close to our lines that one flash of lightning killed several men and horses of the 5th Dragoon Guards, while many more of the piqueted chargers broke loose in unmanageable terror, and galloped wildly among our lines in a way that might have thrown troops of less perfect discipline into confusion. But the French were less exposed to the fury of the tempest, and in the course of the night obtained possession of some heights called Nuestra Señora de la Peña, the possession of which gave them a great advantage in the first part of the next day's operations. The next morning the sky was again clear, and both generals recommenced their manœuvres. The greater part of both armies had crossed the Tormes on the preceding afternoon; and their earliest efforts on the 22nd were directed to the obtaining possession of two hills called Dos Arapiles, the most important of which the French, being nearer to them than the English, succeeded in gaining, and thus greatly strengthened their position, though at the same time they failed in preventing our occupation of the other.

Marmont was a vain man, and piqued himself especially on his skill in directing complicated evolutions, in which

in truth he did greatly excel; and now, elated by the advantage which he expected to derive from the possession of this important post, he thought he had a fine opportunity of displaying this talent to an admiring enemy, and began to execute a series of manœuvres the precise object of which Wellington could not divine, though, suspecting that if they had any object at all but display they were calculated to fix the future operations of the army on the left of the Tormes, he also made some corresponding movements, extending his right to a height behind the village of Arapiles, bringing General Pakenham and the 3rd division, who till that time had been left on the other bank of the river, to his own side of the Tormes, and placing them in a position which, without being seen by the enemy, still secured the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington's line of retreat was now secure, and his position was so strong that he would not have been unwilling to receive the French attack on it; but Marmont preferred to continue his manœuvres, and about two o'clock he moved General Thomière's division, with 50 guns and a strong body of light cavalry, round the right of our position, threatening to turn us on that flank, and to cut us off from the Ciudad Rodrigo road, while at the same time he moved forward some of his other divisions with the view of attacking us and breaking our line, if we should make any endeavour to check the advance of Thomière. As that general proceeded, his troops, which formed Marmont's left wing, became gradually more and more separated from the centre, till at last the disunion was complete.

Ibi omnis
Effusus labor.

That single error undid in a moment all the benefit

1812.
which the French marshal had derived from the untiring energy and skill which he had displayed during the preceding week: and Wellington had obtained what he had long been waiting for, an opportunity of attacking his adversary with decisive advantage. It was nearly three o'clock, and he had just finished a hasty dinner with his brother-in-law, General Pakenham, who, in consequence of the illness of Picton, on that day commanded the 3rd division, when word was brought him of Thomière's movements. He sprang up, and for a few moments carefully observed the advancing columns through his glass; then turning to the Spanish colonel, Alava, who had been one of Pakenham's dinner-party, he announced to him the certainty of the coming victory. "My dear Alava," said he, "Marmont is undone." And then, without a moment's delay, he began to dispose his troops for the attack.

The 3rd division, which formed his extreme right, he strengthened with the 5th division, under General Leith, which he posted behind the village of Arapiles: next to them was the 4th division, under Cole, supported on the left by Pack's Portuguese brigade, and behind them, in reserve, were the 6th and 7th divisions, under Clinton and Hope. On the left, also in reserve, he placed the 1st division, under General Campbell, and the light division, under General Charles Alten. The cavalry, heavy and light, was distributed in different parts of the field. When these dispositions were completed, their chief gave his final orders. The first blow was to be struck by the light division. Pointing to the heights along which Thomière was moving, he bade Pakenham throw his division into columns of battalions and turn their left at that point. "It shall be done; give me "your hand," was the reply of that gallant officer, and

at once he led his division, with D'Urban's brigade of Portuguese cavalry, and two squadrons of our own 4th Light Dragoons, with irresistible impetuosity against the astonished enemy. So furious was his onset, that he was in the middle of them almost before they were aware of his approach: he drove them from height to height, taking above 3,000 prisoners, and in an incredibly short time the battle was gained in that quarter. Almost at the same time, Cole and Leith, with their divisions, Brigadier Bradford, with a brigade of Portuguese, and Sir Stapleton Cotton, with the cavalry, attacked the enemy in front, and drove them before them, the cavalry breaking the French infantry, whether in line or in square, and scattering them with a terrible slaughter, which half avenged the death of one of their most honoured leaders, General le Marchant, who fell in the onset, while one squadron penetrated as far as a French battery and captured five guns.

Soon after the commencement of the fight, Marmont had been borne from the field severely wounded. Bonnet, who succeeded him in the command, was also speedily disabled, and the command devolved on General Clausel, who on this day gave ample proof of the skill and courage which, under another dynasty, won him a marshal's staff and a dukedom as the conqueror of Algeria; for in the centre of the field the battle raged with yet undecided fortune. There the French occupied a position strong by nature and well defended by numerous batteries. Pack was repelled in an attack upon the Arapiles, which they held; and some of the French divisions, which were still fresh, and were gallantly and skilfully led by their generals, Férey, Brennier, and Maucune, attacked Cole and Leith. Both the British commanders fell badly wounded. Beresford, who came

BATTLE
or
SALAMANCA
SALAMANCA
RIVER TORMES
S.t Martha
Los dos Arapeiles
Los Torres
Arapeiles
Carbajosa
Aldea Tejada
Miranda
Pakenham's Column before the attack
Pakenham's column up to attack
A General position of the allied Army on the night of July 21st
B General position of the french Army on the forenoon of the 22d
C Change in the position of the Allies in consequence of the French movements.
D Attack by Pakenham
E Charge of Le Marchants Cavalry
F Light division
G French line of retreat
H Attack on the French rearguard
I Spanish infantry
K March of the French by which they imprudently extended their line

to their support with a fresh brigade, met with the same fate, and for a moment the victory seemed in suspense, till Wellington, who, as was his wont on a day of battle, had been all day present at every spot where his master-presence was most needed, brought up Clinton's division, which he had hitherto held in reserve. The gallant regiments which composed it at once charged the French, who had been beginning to raise a premature shout of triumph, and through a deadly fire pressed steadily on, driving back both horse and foot, till at that point also the enemy abandoned all resistance. Yet so brave were the French, and so skilful was their commander, that their right wing still maintained the combat; but presently Wellington was there also, attacking it with heavy infantry in front, with light infantry and cavalry on the flank, till General Foy, who commanded it, also gave way, and the remaining efforts of the French commanders were only directed to rendering their retreat as little disastrous as they might. They hastened to the Tormes, the darkness (for it was late in the evening before the battle was over) concealing their line of retreat, and Wellington, having no suspicion that D'España had retired from the Castle of Alba de Tormes, directed his pursuit to the ford of Huerta, which he believed to be the only point at which they could cross the river; but Clausel, hearing that the castle was in possession of a French garrison, was leading thither his shattered battalions, and under its protection he crossed the Tormes, and thus saved the remnant of his army from the grasp of the conqueror who deserved a better fortune.

In spite of this disappointment, however, the victory was sufficiently decisive. Nearly 6,000 of the enemy had been killed or wounded; and in addition to that

loss, 7,000 prisoners, eleven guns, and two eagles attested the completeness of the triumph. Our loss was rather under 700 killed and above 4,000 wounded, most of them slightly. It was nearly being far greater, for one of the last shots fired from the French ranks pierced Wellington's holster, and wounded him in the thigh, though providentially the force of the ball had been so far weakened by distance and the resistance of the holster that beyond drawing blood it did him no injury.*

The next morning at daybreak, Wellington continued his pursuit, crossing the Tormes, till at ten o'clock he overtook the enemy's rear-guard, and attacked it with General Bock's German dragoons and Anson's light cavalry, routed it, and took several hundred more prisoners. The light division was also advancing, but

* In this relation of the circumstances of the battle of Salamanca, I have taken no notice of Marmont's account of it, as given at vol. iv., p. 135, of his memoirs, because it is evidently a mere tissue of excuses to throw the blame on his subordinate generals, especially on Maucune, to an ill-judged attack by whom he attributes the loss of the battle; while he never once mentions the name of Thomière, nor the fact that that general had been routed with the loss of 3,000 prisoners before Maucune made any movement at all. He represents his loss as not exceeding 6,000, killed, wounded, and prisoners; though the latter alone amounted to 7,000. Nor does he mention the loss of his guns, while with respect to his own wound, to which of course he attributes no small part of our success, he is not consistent with his formal account of the battle, stating it to have been received "about three o'clock" (p. 139), while in his despatch to the minister-at-war, given in the appendix (p. 444), he fixes it at "a quarter past 4."

Nor have I noticed his statement that at eleven o'clock in the day Wellington was preparing to attack him, if he had not been restrained by the advice of the more prudent Beresford; since in none of the British general's despatches, nor in his more private letters, in which he relates the occurrences of the day, is the slightest hint given of his having even entertained any such intention, which is also completely at variance with the opinion he expresses in a despatch of the previous day, that the superiority of the French in artillery rendered it impossible "to attack them in a chosen position without "considerable loss on our side."

by the afternoon the reinforcement of French cavalry which had marched from the army of the North joined their comrades, and then at last our men, exhausted with their exploits, desisted from any further attack, and Clausel continued his retreat unmolested, urging it on with such rapidity that by the evening of the 23rd he reached Flores de Avila, a village on the road to Segovia, forty miles from the field of battle.

Such was the great victory of Salamanca, the greatest triumph which had graced the British armies since the days of Marlborough, the first great overthrow which the French had sustained on land since their warlike hosts had fought under the banner of Napoleon. Even after the still more momentous results of Vittoria and Waterloo had somewhat obscured its lustre in the eyes of the multitude, it continued to be the favourite exploit of the hero who won it,* as that, we may suppose, which had most fully displayed the perfection of his military genius. In truth, after a prolonged contest of manœuvres with that commander who, of all the French marshals, was considered by his comrades and by his master to be pre-eminently skilful as a tactician, it had been gained by his own superiority to him in that very branch of the military science by his own perfect mastery in the art of attack and of defence, by the fertile vigilance which, in the long march from the Douro to the Tormes, never once gave his adversary an opportunity of engaging him except at a disadvantage, by the eagle-eyed decision which detected the very first error of that adversary, and by the lightning-like vigour which in a moment rendered that error irretrievable, united to that exquisite presence of mind and readiness in handling troops under fire

* 'Life and Character of the Duke of Wellington,' by Lord Ellesmere, p. 27.

which rendered every effort of the French generals to redeem the day only a cause of still further disaster to their intrepid followers.

Nor were the results of the victory limited to the trophies of the day. Not only did it open to the conqueror a path into the heart of Spain, giving no indistinct promise of the deliverance of the southern provinces of the kingdom, and a death-blow to the partisans of the usurper, of whom there had hitherto been many even at the Cortes, but the news of it speedily traversing Europe from west to east, kindled the hopes of many a German patriot, gladdened the hearts of the Prussians eagerly meditating to throw off the yoke which had so long and so cruelly oppressed them: it was borne across the plains of Poland and Russia to the spot where the French and Russian hosts were confronting one another in stern defiance under the walls of Moscow; and Kutusoff cheered his troops on the morn that they were preparing to meet the invaders of their country in the terrible struggle of Borodino with the intelligence of the fearful chastisement which had already fallen on the comrades of their foes in the distant fields of the Western Peninsula.

We may well believe, that as from the beginning of the war no one had discerned all its favourable and unfavourable circumstances with such penetration as Wellington, so no one now foresaw the great results of his victory with equal clearness; yet so magnanimous was his equanimity at all times, so independent of success as well as of failure, that even in the first moment of triumph his demeanour was as unruffled as at ordinary times. The great historian of the war has recorded that he saw him on the evening of the battle, before the last flashes of his guns had ceased to mark the line of

retreat of the defeated enemy: yet even at that as yet grandest moment of his life, no excitement could be detected even in his voice; and it was only in the more than usual vividness of his glance, and the increased brilliancy of his eagle eye, that the slightest trace could be discovered of the feelings of sublime exultation which the events of the day and the prospect of future triumphs which it surely held out to him must have kindled in his breast, as it did in the heart of the meanest trooper in his army.

CHAPTER XX.

Wellington pursues Clausel—Enters Valladolid and Madrid—Soult evacuates Andalusia—Wellington marches northward and besieges Burgos—Raises the siege and retreats towards Salamanca.

CLAUSEL retired towards Valladolid, where he had large magazines. And as soon as Wellington had ascertained the direction of his retreat, and had been rejoined by his commissariat, which on the morning of the battle had been sent on towards Ciudad Rodrigo, he pursued him with great rapidity; not feeling certain at first that the defeated army might not have formed a junction with King Joseph, who had quitted Madrid on the 21st with 14,000 men, and had marched in that direction. But he soon learnt that that monarch, on hearing of the British victory, had begun to fear for his capital, and had fallen back to Madrid; on which he himself, sending word at the same time to Santocildes to cross the Douro, in order to combine his operations with him, pressed on with all speed, still continually falling in with small bodies of the French, and making many prisoners; till on the 30th he entered Valladolid, where, to use his own words, he was received by the citizens "with the same enthusiastic joy that he had been

" greeted with in all other parts of the country;" and Clausel retired towards Burgos, leaving behind him 800 sick and wounded men, which, with a great quantity of artillery and military stores, became the prize of his pursuer. Wellington now turned back towards the south to meet Joseph, who had advanced from Madrid as far as Segovia; but the King, hearing of his approach, again retired to the metropolis, where he hoped to be joined by a reinforcement from Suchet's army in Valencia.

Astorga, which had long been besieged by the Spaniards, had not yet fallen; but the garrison which the French had left at Tordesillas had been forced to surrender; and about the same time, Wellington received an account of a very brilliant action which had taken place between a portion of Hill's cavalry and that of the French opposed to him; but in Valencia, the Spanish army under O'Donnel, since Wellington's advice could never eradicate from the Spanish generals their fondness for pitched battles, had received a decisive defeat from General Harispe. And this event made Wellington exceedingly anxious for the arrival of General Maitland, who had at last been sent by Lord William Bentinck with a small division to attempt some part of the operations which Wellington had recommended, and who was known to have already reached Majorca, though he had orders from Lord William to return to Sicily in September. For Wellington foresaw the probability that the battle of Salamanca would bring Soult from Andalusia to the capital; and knowing that if Suchet should likewise join the King, their combined armies would be irresistible by any force which he could collect, he urged strongly on the ministers that it was important above all things not to allow his army "to be overpowered

" by the junction in operation against them of all the " French armies in Spain." And he argued from the effect which a small squadron under Sir Home Popham on the northern coast had had in preventing Caffarelli from detaching any strong reinforcements to Marmont's army, that a British force actually landing and holding its ground in Valencia would still more fully occupy Suchet's attention, and would prevent him from greatly strengthening the army of the Centre. He therefore begged the ministers to order Maitland not to return to Sicily at present; and wished, indeed, to have that general and his division placed under his command. Nor, even without taking into consideration the probability of his being soon attacked by combined armies of overpowering numbers, was he at all easy with respect to his own army. It was not so much the want of money that pressed upon him, though that had been so extreme that the day before he reached Valladolid he wrote to the Secretary of State, telling him that he had actually been obliged to appropriate the money sent to him for the use of the Spaniards to give a fortnight's pay to " his own troops, who were now five months in " arrear, and were really suffering for want of money," while, as he subsequently was ashamed to hear, " some " of his wounded officers at Salamanca had actually been " forced to sell their clothes to get money." He had, however, since heard that a sufficient supply of specie was on its way to him: but he was sorely concerned at the ill health and consequent inefficiency of many of his regiments, some of which, though they had only just arrived from England and from Gibraltar, and had consequently borne none of the fatigues of the campaign, were " excessively unhealthy;" " unable to bear the " labour of marching in the heat of the sun," owing to

their irregularities, which it was impossible to restrain; while the regimental officers were as negligent of their duty as ever; in many instances disobeying the positive orders given to them with a view to the health of their men, so that the regiments which were so badly commanded suffered severely; and Wellington, while reporting their state to the authorities at home, added, with great sorrow, that "bad as it was, he thought there was rea-" son to apprehend that it would become worse in the " course of the next two months." And he showed his sense of one main cause of the disorders of the soldiers by recommending that the further reinforcements, which he hoped were about to be sent to him, should land at Corunna, because there was no new wine in Galicia, through which province they would in that case march to join the army. Meanwhile, leaving General Clinton with the 6th division at Cuellar, to co-operate with Santocildes's army and some of the guerrilla bands in watching Clausel, he pushed on with the rest against the King, in hopes, if possible, to bring him to action; but Joseph, after a vain show of making a stand among the passes of the Guadarama mountains, during which his court and partisans quitted the capital in nearly three thousand carriages, hearing that Soult refused to detach a division to his support, passed through Madrid, and in haste and confusion marched out at the southern gate of the city, and continued his retreat towards Valencia.

On the 12th of August, Wellington and his victorious army entered Madrid, where they were received with a joy that he himself represented as beyond the power of description, and which cannot even be conceived by any nation which has not, as the citizens of Madrid had, been subjected for four years to the grinding oppression of a foreign usurper. During that period commerce of

all descriptions had been nearly suspended; the wealth of the rich proprietor, the earnings of the artisan had been alike wrung from him by the exactions of an invading army enjoined by its pitiless emperor to find its subsistence and its riches in the resources of the country which it had seized: latterly those resources had been exhausted, and famine had slain its victims by scores and hundreds in the very streets; till it was estimated that since the French first entered the city two-thirds of the whole population had fled or had perished.

With the arrival of the British army the citizens hoped that those days of suffering had passed away for ever. And therefore it was with no extorted semblance of unfelt joy that they thronged the streets and suburbs and roads leading to the city gates to greet the mighty conqueror whose genius and valour had wrought for them this almost unhoped deliverance. Military pomp and pre-arranged ceremonial were not indeed wanting; garlands of flowers strewed the path, shouts of welcome rent the air; but far more touching to his noble heart must have been the silent tears which choked the voices of many of the multitude, while their wan faces, now decked with long-disused smiles, bore evidence at once to the depth of their past misery and the fervour of their present gratitude.

The French, however, had not wholly evacuated Madrid, but had still left a garrison of above 2,000 men in a fortified palace known as the Retiro, which was of further importance, as containing the greatest magazine of military stores which now remained to the invaders in any part of the kingdom. Wellington immediately invested it, and after a brief struggle the governor surrendered, when, besides the prisoners, the captors found nearly 200 fine brass guns, 20,000 muskets, and enor-

mous supplies of powder, clothing, provisions, and military stores of every description.

This vast booty, so materially crippling the enemy for all future operations, was part of the fruits of the victory of Salamanca; and Wellington meditated making it still more productive of decisive results, by marching against Soult, and expelling him from Andalusia. He first desired General Cooke, the British governor in Cadiz, to prepare to attack the force which still blockaded that city, an operation which of itself would prevent Soult from dividing his army by detaching any reinforcements either to Suchet or to the King: though he thought it not unreasonable to be prepared for the possibility that that marshal might prefer removing his whole army to Valencia, to prolonging a useless contest in the south-west. Should he, however, retain his position, his own intention was to give his troops a short rest till the September rains had abated the extreme heat which he had found prejudicial to the health of his army, and then to march against him with a part of his force, taking Hill also under his command, when he was quite sure that Soult would be unable to resist him, but would be forced to quit the province without even venturing on a battle.

The recovery of Madrid was in Wellington's eyes an event of the very highest political importance; and the moment that he became master of it he caused the Constitution to be formally proclaimed, and ordered the citizens to proceed to elect members for the Cortes; and while he remained in the city, he endeavoured by all the arguments he could think of to induce the people generally to adopt a better system of managing their affairs than that which had previously existed. He pointed out to them the advantages which had been already gained to the cause, the prospect of continued success if

they took his advice, and the probability that, if they persisted in disregarding it, the British Ministry might decide on withdrawing from the contest, as seeing no prospect of completing the expulsion of the French from a country the natives of which could not be persuaded to be true to themselves. As yet, he did not think the people improved in any respect since the first day that he had entered their country. Their regular troops he pronounced to be as incapable as ever of undertaking any serious operation against the enemy. Nor could he think them equal to half their number "of any other "nation whatever." The guerrillas were as willing to plunder their own countrymen, especially whenever they could get into a large town, as to harass the French; and were more dreaded in many districts than any army of the invaders. The same dawdling and jobbery as ever united to the same arrogance, boastfulness, and obstinacy existed in every civil department. He could not conceal his astonishment that "the revolution in Spain "should not have produced one man with any know-"ledge of the real situation of the country." He complained that "it really seemed as if they were all drunk, "and thinking and talking of any other subject but "Spain." He allowed that "they cried *Viva!* were "fond of us, and hated the French, but asserted that "they were in general the most incapable of useful "exertion of all the nations that he had known." And he declared that, whether he reflected on his enterprise of clearing the country of its foreign enemies, or on his attempt to reform its domestic abuses, he "shuddered at "the enormity of the task which he had undertaken, with "inadequate powers of his own, and with no assistance "of any kind from the Spaniards in general, or from any "single individual of the nation."

Before the end of August, he found that he had been

correct in his anticipations that no movement towards the south to expel Soult from Andalusia would be necessary on his part, since that marshal was already preparing to quit that province. Not, indeed, voluntarily, for he counselled Joseph rather to concentrate all the French armies there, making that the seat of war, and preventing Wellington from undertaking any operations in the north by the danger in which such a concentration of force so near the southern frontier of Portugal would place Lisbon: but the King, anxious above all things to recover his capital, rejected his advice, and sent him peremptory orders to move to his support, in obedience to which, Soult, though he felt that the battle of Salamanca was thus rendered, instead of a simple victory, "a prodigious historical event,"* raised the blockade of Cadiz, destroyed the immense works which the French engineers had constructed with great skill, labour, and expense, above 1,000 guns, and an almost incalculable amount of military stores of all kinds; and on the 26th of August began his march towards Granada. Hill watched him on the left; Ballasteros and a Spanish army hung upon his right; a small Spanish force and some of the British garrison of Cadiz harassed his rear, and speedily recovered Seville; but he gave none of his enemies an opportunity of inflicting any serious loss upon him. Drouet joined him at Granada, and raised his force to 45,000 men, with upwards of 70 guns: and being then far superior to any of the enemies who hovered round him, he marched steadily on, till at the beginning of October he reached Almanza, and secured his communications with the armies of Suchet and the King.

As soon as Wellington was assured of his intention

* Soult's despatch to the King, quoted by Napier, v., 235.

to quit Andalusia, he decided on moving himself towards the north, to drive from the Douro a detachment of Marmont's army which had advanced to that river since he had been at Madrid; and also to open a communication with Castaños, who had at last succeeded in taking Astorga. Before he set out he issued a proclamation to the citizens of the capital and to the Spaniards in general, couched in language plain and brief, in accordance with the opinion which he more than once expressed, though rather at variance with the general notion of Spanish practice, that such a style had by far the greatest weight with the Spaniards. He urged them to unite in resistance to the demands of the French for provisions and money, without which they could not remain in the country. Besides the considerations of duty to their country which, as being always paramount in his own mind, he never omitted enforcing on others, he sought to stimulate their more selfish feelings by a contemplation of the miseries which the French armies and all their partisans, "the vagabond followers of the usurper driven from the capital of their monarchy," were now daily suffering; miseries which, if properly estimated, might be to them no trifling consolation for those which they themselves had endured at the hands of their oppressors. And though he reminded them that "much still remained to be done to consolidate and secure the advantages acquired," yet he now demanded of them no intensity of exertion, but merely an abandonment of that timid system of co-operation with the enemy, which consisted in a compliance with his exactions; assuring them finally that, if they only forbore to give him assistance, "their perfidious enemy must soon entirely abandon a country which he had entered only for the sake of

" plunder, and in which he had been enabled to remain " only because the inhabitants had hitherto submitted " to his mandates, and supplied his wants."

On his first occupation of Madrid, he had appointed Don Carlos d'España governor of the city; and now he left there and in the Escurial three divisions and a brigade of cavalry, under General Charles Alten; and with the rest of his army, not consisting of above 20,000 men, he, on the 1st of September, commenced his march, having, since "the experience which he had acquired in " military affairs had taught him not to rely implicitly " on any prosperous state of circumstances," and, since the anticipated union of the French armies in the south-east suggested ample grounds for anxiety and caution—having previously furnished Alten with full directions for the evacuation of Madrid, and the destruction of the stores and buildings in the Retiro, in the event of the enemy coming against him in overpowering force, which he had little doubt that he would attempt to do, though he hoped that he might be able to return himself before that event took place, so as to employ all his forces in resisting Soult's expected advance.

On the 6th of September he crossed the Douro at a ford a little above Valladolid, from which city Clausel, whose force was but little inferior to his own, retired at his approach, directing his retreat up the fertile valleys of the rivers Pisuerga and Arlanza, and availing himself of the strong positions which the surrounding hills afforded him with such exquisite skill, that Wellington, though daily turning every position which he took up, was unable to find any opportunity of attacking him with advantage. On the 16th, Clausel halted in front of Burgos, and seemed disposed to try the fortune of a battle; but the same day a strong division of 11,000

Spanish troops from the army of Galicia joined Wellington, and the French general once more retreated, leaving behind him a large magazine of provisions, and encamped on the banks of the Ebro, where a day or two afterwards he was joined by Caffarelli with his division, and subsequently by a strong reinforcement which had been kept in reserve on the Pyrenees: this raised his numbers to 44,000 men, and they were soon to be still further augmented by the arrival of General Souham, who, at Massena's suggestion, had been appointed to succeed Marmont, who was still disabled by his wound, and who joined the army and assumed the command on the 3rd of October.

Wellington, who entered the town of Burgos on the 17th of September, at once invested the castle, which had lately been much strengthened by the French, and which was now defended by a garrison of 2,500 men, under Colonel Dubreton, an officer whose skill and courage almost rivalled that of Philippon at Badajoz, and was aided by better fortune. It was not in itself a place of great strength, resembling, to Wellington's eyes, a hill-fort in India,* many of the strongest of which had in former times yielded to his vigorous assaults; but it was truly formidable when compared to the very insufficient means which he was able to employ for its reduction. After the capture of Badajoz, when enumerating to the Ministry at home the causes which had led to the terrible loss of life incurred in that achievement, he had suggested the formation of a body of sappers and miners; but though that suggestion was subsequently adopted, there had been as yet no time to carry it into execution; and as he had not been followed by his battering-train, and had no means of

* Lord Ellesmere's Sketch, p 30.

transporting heavy ordnance from Madrid, he was almost wholly destitute of artillery capable of breaching the walls. In fact, when he began the investment of the place he had but three guns and five howitzers, and two of the guns were soon disabled by the superior fire of the heavy batteries of the enemy. He therefore from the first was very doubtful of success, founding what hopes he did venture to entertain on a prospect that, as he heard the garrison were "ill supplied with water, and that "their magazines of provisions were in a place exposed "to be set on fire, he might have it in his power to force "them to surrender," by availing himself of one or the other of these points of weakness in their defence rather than by "laying the place open to any regular assault."

He was also greatly influenced in his resolution to make the attempt by the importance of the prize; since if he had succeeded without losing much time, he could, while leaving a detachment sufficient when joined to the Spanish army of Galicia to keep Souham in check, have marched at once to the south, and uniting the English regiments under Maitland, and the Spaniards under Ballasteros to his army, have given battle to the King and Soult with overpowering numbers, and an apparent certainty of victory.

The difficulties under which he undertook the siege were not diminished by the folly, to give it no harder name, of the editors of the Spanish journals, which, in spite of a caution which he had given D'España to prevent it, published as accurate statements as they could procure of the number of his army, of its position, and even of his plans. He sent the mischievous papers to D'España, desiring him to announce to the civil authorities at Madrid that if they did not prevent the publication of such intelligence, which was the only

means which Soult and Suchet had of learning his movements, and which was not unlikely to tempt them to march upon Madrid during his absence, he would withdraw his army and leave that city to its fate. The whole country between the capital and Souham's army was so full of guerrillas, that these papers never reached Souham; perhaps as matters turned out it would have been as well if they had, for had they done so, since that general's force exceeded that of the allies by nearly 20,000 men, he would at once have descended upon Wellington, and have driven him from Burgos, and have thus saved him from wasting his time and strength on a fruitless enterprise: but that general, estimating the strength of the allies at nearly double its real amount, remained inactive, waiting till Soult should move towards him, in order to combine with that marshal in an operation which he was not aware that he was strong enough to undertake by himself.

Wellington's doubts of success against the castle of Burgos were doomed to be but too well realized. One or two attempts to storm or scale the unbreached walls failed, the first of them owing to the misconduct of the field-officer who commanded the troops employed in the assault, who had no qualifications that an officer ought to have but courage, and whose folly being in this instance united with bad fortune, proved a great impediment to all future attacks. On one occasion, Wellington, when pointing out to the Commander-in-Chief the extent to which his difficulties were increased by the frequent changes of officers in charge of different departments of the army, complained that "no one in it ever read a "regulation or order as if it were to be a guide for his "own conduct, or in any other manner than as an amus-"ing novel," and now the officer in question "paid no

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" attention whatever to his orders, notwithstanding that " Wellington himself took the pains to read them and " explain them to him twice over." Instead of making the dispositions which had been enjoined him, he thought of nothing but displaying his own valour; and rushing on as "if he had been the head of a forlorn " hope," he was killed among the first, and his men were left without a leader. Whether he thought his orders so like a novel that he proposed to amuse himself with them in any spare moments that he might find during the assault is not clear; but he had them in his pocket, and thus the garrison, who found them on him, became acquainted with the plans formed for their capture, and of course acquired great facilities for counteracting them.

Wellington then had recourse to mines, with which he inflicted great damage on the works of the castle, but was unable for some time to try the effect of another assault for want of musket ammunition. Meanwhile the garrison kept up an unceasing fire of terrible precision, made one or two successful sallies, destroying our works, and carrying off the tools of the engineers; and though the perseverance of our artillerymen made some small breaches, the skill of our miners at last giving them possession of the outer line of defence, and the gallantry of our stormers effecting a lodgement in a church which had become a post of some importance, so much time had been exhausted in gaining these slight advantages, that during the progress of these operations, King Joseph, having been joined by Soult, began to approach Madrid at the head of 70,000. Hill, who by Wellington's orders had previously advanced to Toledo, finding himself wholly unable to

defend the line of the Tagus, which at this season was fordable in many places, against such an overpowering host, sent news of his situation to Wellington, on which he, with inexpressible reluctance, decided on raising the siege, and retreating towards the Portuguese frontier; sending Hill orders to join him on his march with his own army, and the divisions which he himself had left at Madrid.

Wellington, as he said, "felt severely the sacrifice he "was obliged to make" in thus abandoning an attempt which he had made with such perseverance, and with it the prospect of finishing the campaign triumphantly by the blow in the south which he had hoped to be able to strike. But there is hardly any incident in his life which more fully shows the invincible honesty and magnanimity of his disposition. There is no weakness more common or for which a candid judgment makes more allowance than that which prompts people to lay on others the blame of their disappointments; and Wellington was under very unusual temptation to do so in this instance, not only because his means really had been inadequate to the enterprise, but also because the feeling of his countrymen, who, most unreasonably, had wrought themselves up to a high pitch of vexation and indignation at his retreat, were inclined to lay all the blame on the Ministry, as being the cause of that deficiency of means which had led to the general's and their own disappointment. But he declined to give the slightest countenance to such views, and wrote to England that whatever fault there was belonged exclusively to himself. No blame, he said, could attach to the troops, with whose conduct he had had every reason to be satisfied; and none to the ministers, who had made

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every exertion to supply him with everything necessary. The real cause of his failure he considered to be that he had made an injudicious choice of the troops which he employed, having left at Madrid the 3rd, 4th, and light divisions, who had gained experience in sieges and assaults at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, and having taken with him those which had had no such advantage.

CHAPTER XXI.

His difficulties and skill in the retreat—The French pursue as far as the Huebra—The two armies go into winter quarters—Wellington issues a severe general order—He is made a Marquess; and a Portuguese Duke; and Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish armies.

HIS difficulties were not terminated by the raising of the siege. In fact, it was not easy to remove his army from their position, so completely was the road which he proposed to take commanded by the guns of the castle. But his resources always rose with his difficulties. He gave no indication of his purpose till night; and then, as soon as the darkness shrouded his movements, the wheels of the guns and waggons were enveloped in straw, and the whole army began its march, crossing the narrow bridge over the Arlanza in such perfect silence that the garrison had no suspicion of their movement till some of the Portuguese cavalry broke into a gallop, when they took the alarm, and directed a heavy fire on the bridge, which however did but little injury; and Wellington thus gained a start of many miles on the far more numerous army with which Souham was watching him, as it was not till the next evening that that general knew that the siege was raised.

Souham instantly pursued with his whole force. In the course of the 23rd he overtook the British rear-guard,

consisting of two light battalions of infantry belonging to the German Legion, and of a strong brigade of cavalry under Cotton, supported by a battery of horse artillery, and flanked by some strong parties of guerrillas. Some smart skirmishes ensued, in one of which the guerrillas being driven in among our men threw them into some confusion; and though Cotton and General Anson quickly rallied them, the enemy's cavalry made such repeated charges with superior numbers that they took several prisoners, and broke the squadrons of the German Legion, till Wellington himself came up, and posted the infantry and artillery so as to cover the cavalry; and they, opening a heavy fire of guns and musketry on the assailants, at last drove them back with a loss much greater than that which they had inflicted. Wellington continued his retreat towards Valladolid, delaying the enemy wherever he could do so by destroying the bridges over the different rivers, and occasionally halting and taking up strong positions behind them, so as not unduly to harass or discourage his men by too rapid marches; but they began seriously to add to his labours by a disregard of discipline and subordination which often endangered the whole army. When they arrived at a town named Torquemada, where a great deal of the wine of the district was stored, they broke open the cellars, in spite of all the efforts of their officers to prevent them, and indulged themselves so unrestrainedly that Napier relates that 12,000 men were seen at one time helplessly drunk. It is said that the French soldiers for once yielded to the same temptation; but the prospect of a conflict restored order to both armies, and a second fierce skirmish took place on the banks of the Carion, in which no great advantage was gained by either side, though the blunders of some of his officers

again made the safety of the army depend upon Wellington's personal exertions.

These different actions showed him the entire magnitude of the French force, of which he hitherto had not been fully aware; and finding how greatly it exceeded his own, especially in cavalry, he decided on continuing his retreat to the Tormes if necessary, delaying the enemy by occasional halts in order to give time for Hill to join him at Arevalo on the Adaja. The mismanagement of some of his officers, and the misconduct of a Brunswick regiment however allowed the French to obtain possession of some of the bridges over the Douro which he had been anxious to destroy, and consequently he abandoned his intention of joining Hill at Arevalo, and moved directly on Salamanca, sending that general fresh orders to join him on the Tormes.

On the 8th of November the two armies united, not far from the ground which had been rendered for ever illustrious by the glorious victory of the preceding July; and here Wellington desired if possible to make his final halt. He was not as yet acquainted with the numbers of all the hostile armies which were pursuing him, nor had the French marshals accurate information respecting his. On the 9th, however, they also appeared on the right bank of the Tormes, led by the King, Marshal Jourdain, and Soult, to whom Joseph wisely entrusted the principal command; and it was soon seen that they had at least 90,000 men, of whom 12,000 were cavalry, with 120 guns. Wellington had not above 52,000 British and Portuguese troops, 16,000 Spaniards, and about half the number of guns possessed by the enemy; yet, trusting to the strength of the position which he had taken up, increased now by the state of the Tormes, which was so greatly swollen that few, if any, of the

fords were passable; partly also to the recollections of the former battle on the same ground, which he might well expect to encourage his own men, and to daunt the enemy, he maintained a bold front, and offered battle. Jourdain advised the King to attack him at once, and the question was anxiously considered in the French camp; but finally Soult's counsel prevailed, and it was decided to dislodge the British general by slower, but safer operations. Wellington felt sure that the enemy would not be in haste to cross the Tormes and attack him on the Arapiles, and remained himself at Salamanca in security, till he was surprised to hear, on the 14th, that some of the French divisions had passed the river some miles above Alva, and were marching as if with a design to place themselves on his flank and rear. He at once advanced with a view to attack them, but found them too numerous and too strongly posted to justify such a step; and, as he had not previously courted a battle with such superior foes without securing his retreat, he returned to his former position, still hoping that Soult would attack him; but finding that, instead of doing so, the marshal was manœuvring to cut him off from the road to Ciudad Rodrigo, the next day he broke up from his position, and, moving with a celerity which completely baffled his antagonist, crossed the small river Junguen, being aided by a misty rain which partly concealed his motions, and thus passed Soult's left wing, which had been endeavouring to turn him. Soult now, trusting in his superior numbers, and finding that he could not prevent our retreat without a battle, became desirous of bringing one on, and as Wellington continued his march towards Ciudad Rodrigo, pursued him vigorously, but could only succeed in overtaking a portion of the rear-guard at a ford

of the small river Huebra. Wellington, however, was with the troops assailed, and directed their movements with such skill, that though Soult had brought up 30 heavy guns to command the ford, he could not prevent them from crossing, nor inflict upon them a loss of any importance, or superior to that which he himself sustained.

Beyond the Huebra, the French, who for the last few days had been greatly straitened for want of provisions, made no attempt to continue the pursuit, but retired, their armies again separating: that of Portugal taking up its head-quarters under Souham at Valladolid; that of the South being stationed under Soult at Toledo, while the King's own division, or the army of the Centre, fixed itself at Segovia. Wellington also moved his troops into winter quarters on both sides of the Spanish frontiers, part of Hill's division being advanced as far as Plasencia, and part being withdrawn into Portugal, while his own head-quarters were fixed at Freneda, the whole army being distributed in districts easy to be supplied with provisions and favourable to the health of the soldiers, which had been greatly shattered by the fatigues of a long and arduous campaign of nearly eleven months, and of late by their own excesses.

But before the army separated, Wellington took the opportunity, which the recent irregularities of the troops but too well afforded him, of addressing a reproof to the regimental officers in general, to whose ignorance of their duty he attributed the misconduct of their men, and that misconduct had been of an unusually atrocious nature. Their drunkenness, when vast stores of wine were within their reach, was unfortunately no novel vice in a British army; their killing the herds of cattle and swine belonging to the natives, when urged by hunger, as had once or twice occurred, was not unaccountable,

nor wholly unpardonable; but they had also treated the inhabitants of the country through which they had marched with wanton violence, even before fatigue or privation had soured their mind or excited their lawless appetites; rifling the houses and villages which lay in their path; destroying property which they were unable to carry off; and straggling so far from their ranks that their French pursuers made above 3,000 prisoners who never struck one blow in their own defence. Nor was life spared more than property. Napier has recorded that on the very first day after the army left Madrid, he counted by the wayside the corpses of seventeen peasants who had been murdered by the retreating regiments; and it is not probable that their dispositions softened as their disappointments increased.

Wellington's language was sorrowful as well as severe; such as made it evident that he considered the outrages which they had committed to reflect some degree of disgrace on himself as their commander, and on their country as well as on themselves. He was aware, he said, that "the discipline of every army after a long and "active campaign becomes in some degree relaxed; but "he was concerned to observe that the army under his "command had fallen off in this respect in the late "campaign to a greater degree than any army with "which he had ever served, or of which he had ever "read." He reminded them of the care which had been taken of them, and (without any idea of praising himself, or of mentioning it as the result of his own unparalleled skill) of the safety with which their retreat had been conducted in the face of enemies so greatly superior to them in numbers; pointing out that "the "army had met with no disaster; had suffered no priva-"tions which but trifling attention on the part of the

"officers could not have prevented." The weather indeed had been severe, but "the necessity for retreat "existing, none was ever made on which the troops "made such short marches, or such long and repeated "halts, or on which they were so little pressed on their "rear by the enemy." Yet "from the moment the "retreat commenced, the officers had lost all command "over their men; irregularities, and outrages of all "descriptions had been committed with impunity, and "losses had been sustained which ought never to have "occurred." And he "had no hesitation," he said, "in "attributing these evils to the habitual inattention of "the officers of the regiments to their duty." He admitted "their zeal, their gallantry, and their spirit;" and in a tone of admonition which had in it almost as much of encouragement as of reproof, he expressed his confidence "that if their minds could be convinced of the "necessity of minute and constant attention to orders, "and that the strict performance of their duty was "necessary to enable the army to serve the country "as it ought to be served, they would in future give "their attention to those points," and so avoid a recurrence of the evils which he deplored. He urged upon them the reflection, that instead of "the period during "which an army is on service being a relaxation from "all rule," as too many of them evidently considered it, "it was the period during which of all others every rule "for the regulation and control of the conduct of the "soldiers must be most strictly attended to." And he "entreated them to turn their attention to these points" during the ensuing winter; desiring the commanders of regiments to impress his admonitions upon the inferior officers, and to inspire the non-commissioned officers also with a proper sense of their authority and responsibility;

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entering himself with great minuteness into the details of the duty which belonged to each. "By these means "alone," he said, "could the frequent and discreditable "recourse to the authority of the provost and to punish- "ment by sentences of courts-martial be prevented, and "the discipline and efficiency of the army restored and "maintained during the next campaign."

It is almost impossible to describe the discontent which this letter produced in the army. It may well be supposed that those who deserved the reproof most were not the most willing to acquiesce in its justice; but even those who felt themselves conscience-free were scarcely less patient at being involved in so general an accusation. And we may judge of the effect it produced at the time, by seeing the permanent impression which it made upon Sir W. Napier. That great writer is generally a candid, though certainly not a blind admirer of Wellington; he justly claims for the light division, to which his own regiment belonged, an exemption from the blame thus bestowed, an exemption to which, according to his statement, Wellington used to allow that that splendid corps and the Guards also were entitled. And yet, though writing almost a quarter of a century after the promulgation of the letter, he had evidently not even then wholly forgiven it; while other writers affirm that it made Wellington permanently unpopular with the army in general. But it is equally clear (though the hardships suffered by the troops had been in some instances greater than he suspected, since many of his arrangements for their food which he believed to have been fulfilled had been neglected) that the reproof was but too well deserved by the bulk of the army, and also that it produced a most salutary effect. Within a twelvemonth of the time when it was issued, the troops

were no longer in the country of an ally, but in that of the enemy, and they there exhibited a degree of moderation and rigid fairness in all their dealings with the people which astonished while it conciliated them; which greatly facilitated all our operations during that most eventful winter; and which, when it is contrasted with their conduct towards their allies during this retreat, we can scarcely avoid tracing to the severity of this reproof, and to the resolution with which it inspired the officers to give no cause for its repetition.

In other respects, Wellington had good cause to be satisfied with the campaign, the results of which he did not exaggerate when he pronounced them to have been more important than those of any other "in which a "British army had been engaged for the last century." He had taken two fortresses of the first class; important from their strength, more important still from their situation, which rendered them such effectual barriers to a renewal of the French invasion of Portugal. He had utterly defeated one of the most celebrated of the French marshals in a great pitched battle; he had for a while expelled the usurping monarch from his capital, and had permanently delivered the rich and important province of Andalusia from the invader. The prisoners and the stores of all kinds which he had taken were almost countless, and even the guns it was necessary to reckon by the thousand. It was true that the deliverance of Andalusia had, as he foresaw, rendered his position for a time more difficult, by uniting all the French armies in the centre of Spain, and combining them in a force before which he was compelled to retreat. Yet even that retreat had been conducted by him with such consummate skill that his enemies were never able to attack him with advantage, and that he left them no trophies

except those stragglers who became prisoners through their own misconduct. So that when we review the deliberation of his retrograde movement, and the terrible vengeance which he took for it in the following summer, we may say of him, as Philip of Macedon said of himself under similar circumstances, that he was like a battering-ram, drawn back only to give a more deadly stroke when he next advanced.

Nor were his countrymen, nor the allies whom he thus served, insensible of nor ungrateful towards his unparalleled merits. The Portuguese Government, with a compliment which afterwards seemed a prophecy, created him Duke of Vittoria, annexing a considerable income to the title, which, according to the rule he had laid down for himself in such cases, he declined. His own sovereign made him a Marquess: granting him at the same time, as an extraordinary mark of the royal favour, permission to bear, as an augmentation to his arms, "an escutcheon charged with the Crosses of St. "George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick, being the union "badge of the United Kingdom, as a lasting memorial "of his glorious and transcendent achievements," and easily obtained the consent of Parliament to his desire of granting him 100,000*l.* to support his increase of rank; a portion of which sum was expended in the purchase of the manor of Wellington in Somersetshire, from which he had originally taken his title, though the connection of his ancestors the Colleys with that district had long terminated. And again the walls of both Houses of Parliament rang with the almost unanimous praises of his achievements, which the ministers and the leaders of the Opposition now vied with one another in pronouncing. Again Burdett stood alone, disparaging Salamanca in comparison with Blenheim, and pronouncing the failure

before Burgos the most important event of the whole campaign; while Lord Lansdowne, though equally a member of the Opposition, with better taste and truer judgment affirmed that "the retreat from Burgos had in "no degree tarnished or diminished his splendid achieve- "ments and character. That, on the contrary, it had even "raised the latter, by showing him no less capable, by his "rare talents, of alleviating misfortune than of improv- "ing success." And with prophetic discernment, declared that "no one who had watched his conduct could fail to "have observed that a military school existed in the "Peninsula, in which a race of officers were forming on "whom the country might rely with confidence in fu- "ture." Few predictions have been more amply ful- filled. In that military school the eastern and the western dominions of our sovereign alike found their champions: Combermere, the taker of Bhurtpore; Colborne, the preserver of Canada; Napier, the con- queror of Scinde; Gough and Hardinge, the final esta- blishers of our supremacy in the Punjaub; and Raglan, who first taught the Russians the salutary lesson of how little their stubborn and ferocious masses could avail against the disciplined courage of the British infantry, all served under Wellington in the Peninsula, and were all proud to acknowledge that they owed their successes in great measure to their recollection of their old commander's maxims and achievements.

Lord Somers, also, who had lately lost a son in that country, introduced to the notice of his brother peers a feature in Wellington's character which had not equally come under the observation of others who had been less unfortunate, by testifying to the "parental "kindness which he displayed towards his officers, espe- "cially when disabled by wounds or bad health."

At the beginning of the year 1813, he was also appointed colonel of the regiment of Royal Horse Guards, the Blues, as they are usually called; the command of whom, as part of the guard of the sovereign, was considered more honourable than that of a line regiment. And he evidently felt his appointment as a very acceptable compliment; declaring that "there had never "been so fortunate or so favoured a man" as himself: at the same time, that he also felt, what he gracefully expressed to the lieutenant-colonel of the 33rd, "regret at being separated from that regiment, to which "he had belonged with so much satisfaction to himself "for more than twenty years." And he assured him, that "though no longer belonging to them, he should "ever feel an anxiety for their interest and honour, and "should hear whatever conduced to the latter with the "most lively satisfaction." And about the same time, he was also appointed a Knight of the Garter.

The Spanish Government, which had already exhausted its munificence in titles and pensions, had also at the end of September given a stronger proof (considering the pride and general intractability of the nation) than either the English or the Portuguese of the confidence which his great deeds had extorted from them, by conferring on him the supreme command of all their armies: a trust which he was now willing to accept, though on a former occasion he had been of a different opinion. It was not that he had greatly changed his estimate of the value of Spaniards as soldiers; for, although he had of late found them behave well when acting in the same field with our regiments, he yet pronounced that their discipline as an independent army was in the lowest possible state, and that no improvement whatever had taken place in their organization or military spirit. But their

very defects partly influenced him in the course he was now willing to take; since the fact of their armies having lost all their cavalry and nearly all their artillery, made it impossible for them for the future to act in bodies independent of his army; and this consideration evidently made it desirable that they should be under his command. It was obvious, also, that the evils which so impaired their efficiency could only be remedied by a stronger hand than was to be found among the Spanish generals. As soon, therefore, as he received the permission of his sovereign, he assumed the authority thus conferred on him by the Cortes, and at once applied himself to the gradual cure of those evils. He did not propose to introduce British officers into the Spanish regiments, thinking that their introduction into the Portuguese service had neither been originally judicious, nor as beneficial as other plans might have proved; and that the character of the Spaniards made such a step still less likely to succeed with them; but he wrote a strong letter to the Spanish Minister at War, representing the greatness of the evils that infected their whole army, from its deep-rooted "habits of indiscipline "and insubordination" affecting the officers as well as the private solders; for indeed these habits were greatly owing to the inattention of the officers in general to their duty. He told him, that in accepting the command of their army, he "had charged himself with an "herculean labour, success in which was unpromising," and one which he could only discharge usefully, and would only attempt to discharge, as long as he had the full confidence of the Spanish authorities. And he required that this confidence should be shown by their arming him with ample powers. He demanded the exclusive right of recommending officers for promotion

and for employment, and also the power of dismissing those who should prove unworthy or incompetent, of whatever rank they might be. He required that it should be shown to the whole army that all did depend upon him by the staff being placed at his head-quarters, and by all military reports of every description being for the future sent to him; while reports from him alone should be sent to the Spanish War-Office. Finally (and this was, perhaps, the most important point of all), he insisted that the money applied by the State to the use of the army should be disposed of according to his recommendation. There were other alterations and reforms, he added, which he might propose at a future opportunity, but these were the preliminary demands, a compliance with which was indispensable in his eyes to his having the slightest prospect of success.

They were granted, and he assumed the command; but at the very outset he was met with a difficulty which he had not anticipated. The Spanish generals had of late cheerfully co-operated with him, and had willingly adopted his different suggestions, so that he expected from them a readier submission to his new authority than perhaps from some of the inferior officers: but the moment that the offer of the supreme command was made to him, and before it was formally accepted, Ballasteros, of whose abilities Wellington had a better opinion than of those of the generality of his colleagues, and whose cheerful co-operation was more important than that of any one else, since he was at the head of the army in Granada, the operations of which could not be disregarded by Soult, was so indignant at such authority being vested in a foreigner, that he refused obedience even to the orders of his own government. They, at Wellington's request, had directed him in the begin-

ning of October to cross the Sierra Morena, and to advance to Alcaraz, where reinforcements would join him, in order that his army, by occupying that post, and supporting and being supported by Hill, who was still in the neighbourhood of Madrid, might compel Joseph and Soult to leave a strong detachment to watch him, and might, very probably, altogether prevent the French from marching on the capital. But Ballasteros, solely because this order had been suggested by Wellington, disregarded it, and protested in a public proclamation against any Spaniard being placed under the orders of a foreigner. The Cortes, acting with unusual energy, arrested him, and deprived him of his command: but the evil caused by his obstinate pride was irremediable. The French, as has already been related, having nothing to dread in their rear, drove Hill from Madrid, and compelled Wellington to raise the siege of Burgos. And, in fact, this single act of disobedience on his part was the cause of all the difficulties to which the British general was exposed at the end of the campaign; and if Wellington had been a commander of a less patient temper, of inferior resource amid dangers, and of less indomitable firmness, it might have led to the entire ruin of the cause and the final subjection of his country.

CHAPTER XXII.

The army goes into winter quarters—Amusements of the troops—Improvement of the Spanish soldiers—Wellington's opinion of the Spanish constitution—He receives reinforcements from England—Distress of the French in Spain—Wellington prepares for the next campaign.

THOUGH Wellington dispersed his army into their winter quarters the moment that the French drew back from the pursuit, he did not at first feel sure that the troops would long be permitted to enjoy them, as he apprehended that Soult was still meditating an immediate irruption into Portugal, in the hopes of again being able to fix the principal seat of the war in that country; but he soon found that if the French marshal had ever entertained such an idea, it was abandoned; and though he believed that it would have been "fatal" to the enemy, he rejoiced at it, since his own troops must also have suffered severely in a winter campaign; and they not only required rest, but also that renewed attention to the regulations of strict discipline which could be duly enforced only during a period of inaction.

But those who should form their ideas of the cantonments among which our weary soldiers were now distributed from the glowing sketches of Roberts, or the

sparkling descriptions of Southey or of Byron, would have a very inaccurate notion of the general aspect or accommodations of the country, and might perhaps fancy the commonest soldiers in the enjoyment of luxuries unattainable even by their chief. Mr. Larpent, an accomplished lawyer, who at this time was sent to the Peninsula as judge-advocate-general to the army, and whose office brought him into continual contact with its commander, has given, in a most interesting journal, a far less complimentary description of the country than that which is implied by the pencil of artists, or by the pen of the poet, which in this, as in so many other instances, has lent to the view an enchantment the spell of which is at once dissolved by the rude touch of personal experience.

According to Larpent, Freneda, which Wellington himself selected for his residence, was a little dirty village, in whichthe houses for the most part were no better than English farm-kitchens, though the General's own mansion was almost as good as a village inn, and indeed more handsomely ornamented; though its superior splendour was probably fully counterbalanced in his practical eyes by its being decidedly inferior in comfort, being light-proof rather than air-proof, since, where the window-panes had not been mended with tin, they were so full of holes that his secretaries were sometimes obliged to sit with candles at noonday, having hung their cloaks across the windows to keep out the piercing drafts of cold. The inferior officers, as became their rank, were worse lodged than their commander, in cabins the chief rooms of which had no ceilings, which opened into the street, and which were so bitterly cold that their occupants often stayed twelve hours at a time in bed, in hopes to derive that warmth from the blankets

and clothes which they spread over them that could not be procured from the stifling fires of charcoal, which was the only procurable fuel.

The roads to these mansions were in strict keeping with the abodes to which they led. The same authority pronounces that, compared to them, those in Cornwall or in Ireland, where forty years ago the disciples of Macadam had made but little progress, were bowling-greens; the least rugged resembled the bottom of a muddy ditch, the foremost might have been taken for the rocky bed of a lately dried-up torrent; while the weather was colder than is usual in England at the same season of the year, and quite as variable as in our own proverbially unstable climate.

The weather, however, did not keep in the sportsmen, though the sport to which the Commander-in-Chief most seriously inclined was the least tempting as far as success went. Of winged game there was a fair sprinkling; and the trout fishing in the Coa and its tributary streams was good enough to satisfy even a native of Devonshire or Hampshire; but the rocks were so full of holes that several weeks were spent in hunting before Wellington could make up a brace of foxes; though his want of success did not appear to abate his zeal as a huntsman, since his main object was to get a sufficient amount of exercise, which he at all times considered indispensable to his health: to the sport itself he paid but little attention, nor had he much knowledge of it. His hounds, however, met three days a week, and he was never absent from the fixture; being, indeed, on hunting mornings so eager for his gallop, that at first his officers used to take advantage of his impatience to be off to obtain his sanction to measures which he would not have given had his mind been less occupied; but, as he

said himself, he soon found out their tricks, and for the future interdicted all conversation on business when in his hunting-saddle. The other days were devoted to business, which was performed with a rapidity that astonished all who saw it, being coupled as it was with a methodical precision that forgot nothing, and a keenness of observation that no neglect or error could escape.

Yet all who came in contact with him allowed that no man was more pleasant to transact business with; no man was less altered by prosperity and greatness: his manners were still as frank and unpretending as when he had been merely colonel of his regiment in India; and the sure way to his confidence and esteem was to tell the truth and make no difficulties. His hospitality to his officers was of the most liberal kind, though he admitted that some of his generals gave better dinners than he did; but the cordiality of his manners made amends for the plainness of his cookery, and the honour of dining with the Commander-in-Chief was not the only, nor even the chief temptation to accept his invitations. He was always glad to seize pretexts for more splendid entertainments, and this winter he proposed to give a grand feast at Ciudad Rodrigo, on the occasion of his investing General Cole with the Order of the Bath. On this occasion, however, so many difficulties were made that they threatened seriously to curtail the projected festivities. It was announced to him that all Ciudad Rodrigo could not furnish plates and dishes enough for the expected guests. It was apprehended, too, that the ladies might take cold, since during the siege the cannon-balls had carried away a great part of the roof of the ball-room; and though twelve months had elapsed since that time, the Spaniards had been too

indolent to have it mended. However, at last all obstacles were smoothed away; the gaps in the roof and the dilapidated walls were concealed with satin draperies brought from some of the palaces at Salamanca; a sentinel was placed over a hole in the floor, to prevent any dancer from falling through it into the cellar; plate was borrowed in all directions; china and glass were bought and hired at Almeida. The meat, indeed, had been mostly cooked at Freneda, seventeen miles off, and was rather cold; but wine was abundant, and some of the Spaniards had so far adopted what they conceived to be the national custom of their allies, that they got as drunk as Englishmen or Irishmen. Even in their intoxication, however, they so far respected the General's detestation of plunder, that it is related that very few silver forks or spoons were stolen and the only act of that kind which has been placed on record was confined to the abstraction of a leg of turkey, which one of the servants discovered sticking out of the pocket of a Spanish officer. Their moderation in this respect was far superior to that of the monarch who had been set over them; for Joseph would at times carry off, not only all the plate of those who entertained him, but even the table-cloths and sheets; and if he had been accessible to shame on such a subject, he must have felt the reproof given him by the conduct of Wellington, who, when he quitted Madrid, had taken care that his palace should be found by him on his return in exactly the same state as that in which he had left it, and would not permit his soldiers to touch a single article of what the French army would undoubtedly have looked upon as lawful plunder.

During the whole winter, Wellington occupied himself with great diligence and perseverance in endeavouring

to restore the discipline of his own troops, and to infuse a comprehension of its requirements into the minds of the Spaniards. The points in the conduct of his own men which gave him the greatest uneasiness were their propensity to plunder and to desert; and this latter habit, strange to say, increased greatly in the following winter, when they were on the French frontier. A great deal of the evil he attributed, as has been mentioned before, to the blamable laxity of the courts-martial. Sometimes they had a kind of paroxysm of justice, though when they did find prisoners guilty, their sentences were often illegal; but they continually acquitted most notorious offenders; and officers prosecuted for neglect of duty were almost sure to escape, because, according to his indignant comment, nearly all the members of the court-martial were more or less guilty of the same offence.* Even when they could not avoid finding the prisoners brought before them guilty, they recommended them to mercy, though convicted of such atrocious crimes as deserting, and serving in the enemy's ranks against their comrades; thus greatly, as he told them, increasing the labours of his task in upholding the discipline and efficiency of the army. His efforts to make the courts do their duty were almost fruitless. Sometimes he tried severe reproof, at others he had recourse to sarcasm and irony, of which he was an admirable master, to shame them into the performance of justice, ridiculing the fine-drawn distinctions by which they tried to screen those whose fault they could not deny; on one occasion, for instance, suggesting to them that however the culprit himself might agree with them, there was a danger that his comrades might not be clear-headed enough to see the difference between "taking

* Larpent, i., 101, 110, &c.

" a horse from its owner, riding it away, offering it for " sale, and abusing and ill-treating the owner when he " comes to claim it, and stealing it." He complained bitterly, that the outrages of the men, and the laxity of the tribunal, made him little better than a general of courts-martial; but at last, by energy and unsparing severity, by hanging several of the worst criminals, and cashiering several officers, he taught them all the policy of a better system, and during this winter he laid the foundation of an improved state of conduct and feeling which has never since been eradicated from the British army.

With the Spanish soldiers his task was different, since in their case he had not so much to restore as a proper sense of the requirements of discipline and subordination; but by unwearied labour and resolute firmness, combined with the most patient good temper, he gradually made an impression on them also, till, before the season arrived for the resumption of active operations, he was able to pronounce them considerably improved. He was careful not to offend their pride by seeming to despise their previous system, and as far as possible he avoided the appearance of introducing new regulations, telling them that he was only enforcing the observance of the rules which already existed in their service, and which were very good.* But of the Government, and even of the spirit of the people in general, he had a still worse opinion than formerly, believing the people to be now so weary of the war that, though they were certainly desirous to see us beat the French, they would prefer the French beating us and driving us from the country, if that would at once restore peace, to seeing us eventually the conquerors, if our victory could only be

* Larpent, i., 149, 153.

gained by a protracted continuation of hostilities; while the Government broke all their promises to him, and violated all the conditions to which they had agreed when he took upon himself the command of their armies, till they provoked him to complain that they did not treat him "even as a gentleman." And before the commencement of the next campaign, they even contemplated the enactment of a law forbidding the entry of foreign troops into their garrisoned towns, which he declared he should be forced to look upon, if passed, as a wanton insult to the integrity of the whole army.

He had from the beginning so greatly distrusted their adoption of the measures which he considered indispensable to enable him to discharge his new duty as commander of their armies to his own satisfaction and credit, that in December he had gone to Cadiz to urge upon the Cortes in person the necessity of giving him all the powers which he demanded, and his firm resolution to relinquish his post if they were not given. He was formally introduced to the Cortes, and made them a speech, thanking them for the honours which they had paid him, and telling them that it was "upon their "wisdom, discretion, and firmness that, under the will "of Divine Providence, the result of all the exertions "of himself and the army depended." And he at the same time issued an address to the Spanish army, assuring them of his "earnest desire that his arrange-"ments might tend to enable them to serve their "country with advantage, and that while under his "command the honour of their profession might be "advanced;" and insisting that, with a view to this end, "the officers should enforce and maintain in every "particular the discipline ordered by the royal regula-"tions, as, without discipline and order, not only is an

" army unfit to be opposed to an enemy in the field, but " it becomes a positive injury to the country by which " it is maintained;" assuring them, finally, that he would be equally on the watch " to draw the notice of " their Government to their good conduct, or to any " inattention on the part of the officers to their duties, " or to any breach of discipline and order by the sol- " diers."

A nearer inspection of the working of their new Constitution did not increase his approbation of it. He had said before that they had drawn it up on the same principle that a painter paints a picture, namely, to be looked at. And he now wrote to Lord Bathurst, that the English reformers could hardly have a more useful lesson than would be afforded by a visit to Cadiz, where they might " see the benefit of a sovereign popular " assembly calling itself 'Majesty,' and of an executive " government called 'Highness,' acting under the con- " trol of 'His Majesty' the Assembly." He declared that there was in fact no authority in the State except the newspaper press, which at Cadiz was of all others " the least enlightened and the most licentious;" and which was at this moment very unfriendly to England, having also such influence over the whole population as to cause him to be received in that city with a coldness which was strikingly at variance with the enthusiasm with which he had been greeted, not only at Lisbon, but in Valladolid, Salamanca, Madrid, and, in short, in all the other Spanish cities which he had visited.

He did not obtain all the power which he desired, since the virulence of some of the newspapers, which, actuated by the same spirit as Ballasteros, exclaimed against such submission to a foreigner, alarmed the Cortes too much to allow them to accede to all his

demands; but he reported to his own Government that he believed that he had obtained sufficient authority to enable him to act with effect; and he hoped that now that the Spanish authorities "understood that he was "in earnest" he should not find much more difficulty in managing matters as he wished. Altogether, he was satisfied with the effect of his journey: though before he quitted Cadiz, he warned some of the most honest of the statesmen in that city, that whatever might be the result of the military operations of the war, it would be insufficient to secure the country from the greatest evils if they did not retrace their steps and remodel their system of government.

In the whole series of his published letters there are few more remarkable than one addressed to one of the Deputies in the Assembly of the Cortes on this subject;* both because it shows the great soundness of his views on the nature of constitutional governments in general, at a period of his life when his attention had been very rarely turned in that direction; and also because it is probable that the contemplation of the evils which in it he traces to the adoption of theories which could not be carried out in practice had no small influence on his mind when he was afterwards at the head of affairs in England, and when he so resolutely withheld his countenance from even the most moderate proposals of reform. He points out to his correspondent that the existing Constitution of the country had not even the merit of being popular; though he admitted that it might be an exaggeration to affirm, as Joseph Buonaparte had affirmed in a letter to Napoleon, that the people preferred his government to the theories of the Cortes. The first of these theories was a Legislative

* Dispatches, x., p. 61, date Jan. 29, 1813.

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Assembly, which had declared itself supreme; having for its creature an Executive Government which the people felt had neither authority to control nor to protect them; while both Assembly and Government were so arranged that neither could have any knowledge of the feelings and measures of the other: at the same time that in consequence of this their mutual ignorance they were jealous and afraid of each other, and thus the whole machine of government was at a stand. The Council of State failed to preserve any balance between them, and was available for no good purpose whatever. But what in Wellington's mind was most calculated to cause alarm was that no measures whatever had been adopted, and no barrier provided to guard landed property from the encroachments and violence to which it is particularly liable during the progress of revolutions. "He trembled," he declared, "for a country in which "there was no security for the preservation of private "property, except the justice of a legislative assembly "possessing supreme powers."

"But," he added, "he was not one of those who "point out faults without proposing remedies." And accordingly he proceeded to point out what in his opinion ought to be done. He was very anxious "that "they should establish a government founded on prin-"ciples of justice, which should secure the liberty of "their country;" but this could only be done by their discarding the wild theories of modern days, "and "taking for their guides experience and the examples "of those countries in which freedom existed." And the example which he had in view was naturally that of his own country. He recommended, therefore, that a Regency should be established, "with all the powers "allotted by the Constitution to the King in the hands

" of one person." That the Regent should be assisted by a council of five members, chosen by himself, the duties of which, as he proposed to distribute them, would very nearly correspond to those of a British Cabinet, " and " each of the members of which should be responsible " for his own department," as " the whole Council should " be for the general operations of the Government." He also advised the repeal of an absurd article in the Constitution, which forbade deputies in the Cortes to be re-elected, and which, therefore, would necessarily exclude from any future Cortes every one possessed of previous experience in that assembly. And as a security for property, he urged " the establishment of an assembly " of the great landed proprietors, such as our House of " Lords, having concurrent powers of legislation with " the Cortes:" asserting, as a fact beyond doubt, " that " there was no man in Spain, be his property ever so " small, who was not interested in the establishment of " such an assembly."

In one material point his suggestions were at variance with the practice of our own Constitution: since he advised that the Regent's Council, " if members of the " Cortes, should receive no salaries for the performance " of their duty." It is not easy to discern the reason which dictated this suggestion. He did not expect the business of their separate departments to be light; and the principle of our own government is that we ought to give our ministers, as performers of laborious duties, ample salaries; not only in justice, because the labourer is worthy of his hire, but in policy also, lest they should otherwise be led to pay themselves in a manner far more detrimental to the honour and interest of the State than the disbursement of any salary, however liberal. And such a danger at that time certainly required to be

guarded against in Spain far more than in England, since jobbery and corruption of every kind were stalking unrestrained and undisguised throughout the whole of that kingdom. Nor is it clear how the right of the members of the Council to salaries could be affected by the fact of their being also members of the Cortes.

He declared that measures such as these could alone "give their government some chance of standing, and "their country some prospect of avoiding further revo-"lutions." At the same time, with his invariable abnegation of personal considerations, he assured his correspondent that the rejection of his advice (which he no doubt foresaw) would make no difference in his endeavours to serve Spain, but that "he would fight for "her as long as she was the enemy of France, whatever "might be her system of government." He had thus delivered his opinion, because he felt confident that no military success could insure the prosperity of the country under its existing Constitution. And though at the time his brother Henry differed from him in some of the views which he thus expressed, it can hardly be denied that time has justified them; and that the disturbed state of Spain in subsequent years; the lamentable, and for the most part disgraceful events which have disfigured her history; the conspiracies, the revolts, the insurrections, the massacres, the revolutions; the sad spectacle of a king trying to outmanœuvre his people, and of a people threatening to dethrone their king; the renewed invasion of the French, and civil war, with all its atrocities and horrors and crimes, may be traced in a great measure to the disregard at this time shown to his advice, and to the refusal of the Spanish Cortes to remodel their Constitution when it was in their power to do so deliberately and peacefully.

He had soon the satisfaction of seeing that the exertions which he had made for the improvement of the discipline of all the armies under his command were rewarded with great success. The health, too, and consequently the effective strength of his British regiments improved rapidly. And he also received large reinforcements from England, especially of cavalry, though, much to his dissatisfaction, he was at the same time directed to send back to England some of those regiments which, having been for some time employed under him, had become seasoned to the climate and to the service; for both of which "training and habit were required." He represented earnestly to the authorities at the Horse Guards, that for his next campaign "it was better to "have one soldier or officer, whether of cavalry or in-"fantry, who had served one or two campaigns, than to "have two, or even three, who had not;" though he admitted that the considerations of what was necessary "for the whole army, and for the general service of the "empire," might compel the Commander-in-Chief to disregard his opinion. Lord W. Bentinck also exerted the power which had been granted to him of claiming some regiments for the service of Sicily; and some were sent to America to reinforce the army of Sir George Prevost in the unfortunate war that had again broken out between us and the United States. Still the numerical addition to his force was considerable, especially in the two branches of cavalry and artillery, in which he most required increased strength. The Portuguese troops, too, though not numerous, were in an admirable state of discipline; and very great improvement in this respect was also visible in the Spanish regiments, though he had reason to apprehend that the failure of their Government to furnish them with proper supplies and

means of transport would materially impede his power of employing them.

The condition of the French armies in Spain was likewise at this time such as to give him great encouragement. Instead of trebling and quadrupling his numbers, as they had done in former years, they now scarcely outnumbered him at all, if we take into account the force of the Spanish armies in different parts of Spain; for the complete failure of Napoleon's Russian expedition, which had not only enormously diminished his army, but had also emancipated Germany from the thraldom in which he had so long held it, raising him up fresh enemies throughout all the north and east of Europe, had compelled him to withdraw large bodies of troops from the Peninsula, and had reduced his armies in those countries to less than 200,000 men. Moreover, this diminished force was in great distress, which extended even to the court of the King. Joseph wrote to Napoleon, declaring that he was in such poverty as no monarch had ever endured before; that he had even sold his plate to supply his daily necessities; and that many of the Spanish nobles who adhered to his cause were worse off even than himself. One of the most eminent of them, the Marquis of Cavallero, a councillor of State and minister of justice, had been actually seen begging for a piece of bread;* while Marshal Jourdain, the major-general of the French armies under the King, complained that he was in equal distress, and that, after borrowing till his credit was exhausted, he could with difficulty procure subsistence.

Circumstances such as these of course impeded the operations of the French: the more so as they could not be kept long concealed from their enemies: and the

* Letter quoted by Napier, v., 445.

knowledge of them encouraged the guerrillas to attack them on a larger scale than formerly. One of the most enterprising of their chiefs, Mina, having assembled a body of 5,000 men, overran Navarre and the other provinces on the French frontier. Nor could Clausel, whom Napoleon sent to replace Caffarelli in that district, with all his skill and energy, make head against the different bands which cut off all communication between the French armies and their country, with any force that either the Emperor or the King could place at his disposal.

Wellington was now eagerly looking forward to the moment when he could commence his next campaign. But he, too, had difficulties to contend with. Most of his old annoyances, arising from the neglect of both the Peninsular Governments to provide pay and supplies for their troops, continued in full force; and he had now others in addition of a different kind, and arising from a different cause, namely, from the greatness of his past success. In Portugal, the entire expulsion of the enemy from that country, and the high state of discipline and efficiency to which their army had been brought, had led the people to think that they no longer wanted the protection or aid of the British army, but that they were able to defend themselves; and in consequence, they, and especially the higher classes, became impatient of an alliance which placed foreigners in the highest posts in their army; and all ranks were as discontented as ever with the system which billeted troops upon them, and with their liability to be called upon to serve, and were therefore weary of the war altogether. While in Spain, the progress of our arms had revived the inland traffic which in times past had been the chief subsistence of the muleteers, whose services had become almost indis-

pensable to our troops; but who now, finding that their more lucrative and more favourite occupation was re-opened to them, began to desert in considerable numbers; and the loss of their services threatened us with very serious embarrassment, as our dependence on them for the transport of many articles of necessity was almost entire.

The Spanish Government, also, presently began to violate their engagements with him in every point; even to the extent of issuing orders to the troops at direct variance with those which they knew that he had given; moving to Seville regiments and divisions which he had sent to Alicante; removing officers from posts in which he had placed them; and appointing others to situations for which they were unfit, or in which they were not wanted; and doing all this without even giving him any notice of their having done so; till at last, at the beginning of April, he addressed a letter to his chief supporter in the Cortes, in which he gave a full account of the conduct of the Government, and of the evils to be expected from it: pointing out, that in proportion to the expectations of improvement which had been raised by his appointment would be the blame which would be thrown upon him when it was seen that no such improvement had taken place; and that, "as he had a "character to lose," if the Regency did not adhere to the engagements which they had made with him, he must resign his situation. There can be little doubt that he would have done so had he not felt not only that his retaining the command of the Spanish armies gave confidence to the enemies of Napoleon in other parts of Europe, but that the cause of Spain was likewise materially involved in his doing so, since by that means

alone those armies were "kept clear of interference in the "disputes of the parties of the day," and had whatever exertions they were in a condition to make directed against the enemy.

He had also some trouble with his own Government, which had countenanced some British merchants at Lisbon, whom he constantly designates as "*sharks*," in purchasing bills issued by our commissariat in the Peninsula at a depreciated rate, conduct which had naturally the effect of greatly raising the price of the supplies necessary to be purchased in the country for the use of the army. He complained to the Secretary of State that, in giving countenance to such measures, the Lords of the Treasury had neither consulted his opinion, nor "placed in him the common confidence which he might "have expected," or they would have learnt from him the great inconvenience which they caused to the public service, not only by raising prices, but by encouraging those merchants to intrigue with all those with whom the army had dealings, for the purpose of getting more of these securities into their hands; and the general result was, that he was threatened with a want of money, which, at all times the chief sinew of war, was never more indispensable than in a country like Spain, where there was such a general reluctance to give credit, and such an universal ignorance of all proper mercantile and financial principles.

But amid all these difficulties and annoyances, he comforted himself by the increased strength and efficiency of the army under his command, and was eager to take the field at the first moment that the weather would allow. His intention was at once to advance into Castile, and this could not be done till the rains had

brought forward the green crops, so that there might be plenty of forage for the horses, which might be expected to be the case by the beginning of May. Soult had returned to France, since Joseph's jealousy of him had rendered it impossible for Napoleon to retain him in Spain with advantage; but Suchet was still at the head of a powerful army, for which Wellington was desirous to find employment on the eastern coast, in order to prevent him from giving any support to the King, whom he himself destined to be the object of his first attack. He therefore directed Sir John Murray, who had lately succeeded to the command of the army at Alicante, to embark his troops, and sail to the northward to lay siege to Tarragona, when it might be expected that the danger of that important town would induce Suchet to weaken his force in Valencia for the purpose of saving it; so that the Spanish armies in that province might be able to make head against the French divisions which would be left there, and perhaps to recover a great part of it; or that, at all events, if they had only the prudence to avoid a defeat, Murray and the Spaniards together would occupy Suchet too fully to permit him to send the slightest aid to the King.

Wellington had hoped to be able to quit his head-quarters by the 1st of May, but the early part of the spring had been unusually cold and dry, and consequently the grass was very backward. Nor was it till the last day or two of April that the rain came, which commonly arrives in that country about the time of the equinox, so that the opening of the campaign was unavoidably delayed. The wet weather also, when it did come, broke up the roads, so that the pontoon-train, which had been left in the rear, arrived later than had

been expected, and the middle of the month had passed before the troops were put in motion; Wellington himself remaining at Freneda a day or two longer, in order, since his movements were those about which the enemy were most solicitous, and of which also they found it easiest to procure information, to prevent their receiving notice of his advance till the latest possible moment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Wellington leaves his winter quarters—Joseph retreats from Madrid—Wellington pursues him—Takes Burgos—The battle of Vittoria—Its immense results—Wellington pursues the French.

AT last, on the 22nd of May, 1813, Wellington himself started from Freneda, and the same day reached Ciudad Rodrigo, having quitted Portugal never again to return to it. So confident did he feel that his days of retreat were over, that, as he crossed the stream which separates that kingdom from Spain, he turned in his saddle, looking back on its receding plains, and waving his hand as a last salutation, exultingly exclaimed, "Fare-well, Portugal!"* But high as his hopes were, they could hardly have pictured to him such brilliant success as fortune and his own genius had in store for him; they could hardly have whispered to him, that in little more than four months he would be quitting Spain as triumphantly as he was now quitting Portugal, and standing as the first invader on the soil of France; that before a year had elapsed, having won six pitched battles, and lesser combats without number, having taken many a strong fortress and many a wealthy town, he would be

* Napier, v., 513.

again in his own land, from which he had been so long absent, receiving the admiring, grateful homage of his at length unanimous countrymen.

Before the British army quitted its cantonments, Joseph, in compliance with Napoleon's advice, had quitted Madrid, leaving one division in that capital at once to protect and to overawe it. He himself, having with him about 35,000 men, fixed his head-quarters at Valladolid, and the rest of his army was spread over the adjacent district, some of his divisions being as near Madrid as Segovia, and some advanced to Salamanca, and as near to the Portuguese frontier as the banks of the Elsa, which falls into the Douro below Zamora. His whole army amounted to little less than 80,000 men, of which above 12,000 were cavalry, and they had 150 guns. Nearly 70,000 men under Suchet were still prosecuting the war in the eastern provinces, and 40,000 more were under Clausel in the north, where a very formidable insurrection, spreading through the Asturias, Biscay, and Navarre, fully occupied the attention of that able general. Wellington's army consisted of upwards of 70,000 British and Portuguese troops, and he expected also to be aided by the Spanish army of Galicia; so that in his entire numbers he was not very inferior to the army immediately opposed to him; but he still fell greatly short of them in cavalry and artillery. Thinking, however, that he should never be stronger, nor the French weaker, than at the beginning of the campaign, he desired to bring on a battle at as early a period as possible, since if he were victorious the enemy would be at once compelled to retire to the Pyrenees. His first object was to cross the Douro with one part of his army, and with another to force the passage of the Tormes, so as to turn the French position on the former river, and

to compel them to fall back behind the Carion, and from thence beyond Burgos and Madrid, towards the Ebro. With this view he distributed his army into three divisions. The right wing, under Hill, he directed to pass the Tormes at Alva; the left, the strongest of the three, under Sir Thomas Graham, having crossed the Douro within the Portuguese frontier, was to march along the right bank of that river, taking possession of Zamora and Toro as it passed; while he himself, with a single division of light infantry and a brigade of cavalry, marched straight upon Salamanca.

Graham's progress was slightly delayed by the exceeding difficulties of the country through which he marched, but with this exception the whole of Wellington's arrangements succeeded precisely as he had planned them. It was in vain that the French battalions in Salamanca barricaded the streets and bridge over the river, and endeavoured to arrest his advance, or at least to discover his numbers; Wellington himself attacked them, and drove them from their position with the loss of several prisoners and guns. Hill met with no resistance whatever, and joined his chief between the Tormes and the Douro, and then Wellington quitted that division and went towards Graham, from whom he had received no intelligence, and who he consequently feared had met with some disaster. He passed the Douro himself at Miranda, in a basket slung on a rope, which was fastened to the cliffs on the opposite sides of the river, several hundred feet above the roaring torrent, and on the 30th of May he reached Carvajales, on the Elsa, and joined Graham, who had toiled on with unfaltering energy through defiles and over mountains so broken and rugged (the district through which he passed had previously been considered nearly impracti-

cable for any troops) that in a march which for some of his columns amounted to 250 miles he had only exceeded by a day and a half the time originally allotted to him. On the 31st of May, the left wing of the army crossed the Elsa, and advancing rapidly, drove the French from Zamora and Toro, repairing the bridges which the retreating enemy had broken down; and on the 3rd of June Hill also brought the right wing and centre of the army, which had been left by Wellington under his command, to the left bank of the river, crossed it at Toro, and the whole army was again united, and after halting one day, proceeded onwards, greatly encouraged by the complete yet cheap success of all its previous operations.

They were encouraged still more by the result of a brilliant cavalry skirmish, in which our 10th Hussars "destroyed the 16th French Dragoons," and took above 250 prisoners. It was soon ascertained that the chief army of the enemy was retreating towards Burgos, and the other French divisions (which had for some days been moving in uncertainty, some of their generals having been led by information which they received, and also by Hill's earlier movements, to believe that the main attack would be made on the line of the Tormes, and others thinking the valley of the Tagus the intended line of the British advance) now fell back towards Arevalo or Segovia, with the intention of joining the King in the neighbourhood of Valladolid. Had Graham been able to reach the Elsa at the time that Wellington originally fixed, the greater part of the French army would have been overtaken before the different divisions had joined, and could hardly have avoided being destroyed in detail; but though Wellington may perhaps have felt some little disappointment at having been

unable to strike the blow on which he had with reason calculated, he felt sure that the evil day to the enemy was only deferred, and that the delay which had taken place would in no degree enable them to escape him. They continued their retreat, and he continued his pursuit; their motions were a little delayed by the necessity of waiting for the division which was coming to join them from Madrid, the march of which was encumbered by the vast plunder which it had carried off from the city, including the pictures of the royal palaces, and the plate of the churches and cathedrals. Wellington's attention was more creditably occupied in restraining his troops from pillage, and in pressing on the Spanish Government the policy as well as the justice of pardoning those Spaniards who, partly through fear and partly through the distress to which they had been reduced at the beginning of the war, had taken the side of the French, but who were now eager to quit it provided they could be assured that their return to their duty would not be their destruction. He did not advise that those who had condescended to become ministers of Joseph, or who had shown themselves such active partisans of that monarch as to win over others to his side, and still less those who had borne a part in any of the cruelties exercised by the French upon their countrymen should be pardoned; but for all others he advocated a general amnesty, partly because such a measure would at once deprive the enemy of many valuable partisans, and partly because, if there was ever to be peace, such an amnesty must eventually be granted, unless the government were prepared to drive from the land a large body of men, many of them rich, many of them able, but who would nevertheless, from the very necessity of the situation to which they would then be reduced, all

become interested in disturbing the tranquillity and overthrowing the government of their too revengeful country, unless they were disarmed and conciliated by a lenity recommended as much by policy as by humanity.

Joseph had designed to give battle to his pursuers on the plains of Burgos; but Wellington pressed him with such vigour that he had no time to collect his forces. On the 7th the British General passed the Carion; on the 9th he crossed the Pisuerga; and after a slight halt, pushed on his right wing towards Burgos on the 12th, turning one strong position which the French had attempted to take upon the Hormaza, making several prisoners and taking some guns in a sharp skirmish, and compelling them to abandon Burgos, where they blew up the castle, which Du Breton had defended so gallantly in the preceding autumn, with such precipitation that the explosion destroyed some hundreds of their own men. Joseph hurried on towards the Ebro, and Graham, with the British left wing, pressing forward with equal speed, crossed that river on the 13th of June, and in the course of the next two days was followed by the other divisions of the army. At last, on the 16th, the French halted in their retreat and made a show of taking up a position; but they were speedily driven from it with the loss of several hundred prisoners; and a similar demonstration of theirs on the 19th had a like result, since, though their position was very strong, Wellington turned their left with the light division, while Cole attacked them in front with the 4th, and they were driven back in confusion to Vittoria, where their whole army was now assembled.

Yet during this long triumphal march, Wellington was greatly harassed by the difficulty of supplying the Galician army, which now formed part of his force, and

which their incurable government had left destitute of everything, even of cartridges for their muskets, of mules to carry their ammunition, which was perhaps of less consequence, since they had none to carry, and, of course, of pay. He was forced to arrange to place them, if possible, in reserve, where they would have no occasion to fire. And he also took upon himself to supply them with small sums from the British military chest, though, from the great scarcity of specie that at this time existed in England, he himself was in great want of money, and was often obliged to send for stores to Lisbon, from his inability to pay for them in Spain, a measure which frequently caused vexatious and injurious delay to his operations. Yet after all his exertions he had great fears that, in consequence of their total want of means of transport, the Spanish troops would be unable to continue long with him, and that, "though it was said "that 160,000 of them were in arms, the campaign would "be fought without the aid of a single Spanish corps." As usual, he addressed strong remonstrances to the responsible minister, setting before him, in the plainest language, "the misery suffered by the troops," and complaining indignantly that "the soldiers of Spain were "starving in rich provinces, which only last year main- "tained ten times the number of French in plenty, and "that this was owing to maladministration and to the "misapplication of the public funds."

The difficulties of the Spanish divisions evidently made it desirable to bring the enemy to action as speedily as possible. It had from the first been Wellington's intention to do so, and the political expediency of such a step was increased by the news which he at this time received of the sanguinary but indecisive battles of Lutzen and Bautzen, of the efforts which Napoleon was

making to detach Russia from the ranks of his enemies, and of the hesitation which was evident in the councils of Austria. A great victory on the Ebro was likely to have no small influence in the deliberations on the Danube and on the Elbe. On the morning of the 20th he came in sight of the whole French army, posted in battle array on the heights in front of the town of Vittoria. It was not the first time that this region had witnessed the deeds of British valour. Najara, where the Black Prince had defeated Du Guesclin, in the battle which seated the legitimate sovereign, Peter, on the Spanish throne, was at no great distance; and one of the hills, about to be reddened with the blood of the coming strife, had been in the same age the actual scene of a desperate fight maintained against an overpowering host of Spaniards by two knightly brothers of England, Sir Thomas and Sir William Felton, with a handful of followers, who were slain to a man, and in memory of whose valour the spot on which they fell had ever since borne the name of the Englishman's Hill.

Vittoria stands at the further end of a small plain or basin between hills, studded with three or four villages, which became important objects in the ensuing battle, and is intersected by the small river Zadorra, which, seven or eight miles above the town, turns almost at right angles towards the Ebro, meeting it at Miranda, where that river is about the size of the Thames at Windsor. Behind the Zadorra, and nearly parallel to its course towards the Ebro, rises a ridge of hills of moderate height, but steep and rugged, the right extremity of which comes down upon the Zadorra a mile above the angle spoken of, and the left joins a somewhat loftier chain, which runs parallel to the higher parts of the same river and closes in the other side of the basin.

On these hills the French army was posted, and here Joseph, aided by the greater military experience of Marshal Jourdain, resolved to make an effort to arrest the victorious arms of the British General, and to strike one blow for the crown, which he felt was tottering on his head. He had been compelled to weaken his army by allowing one good division to depart as the escort to two enormous convoys of baggage and plunder which he had taken with him on his departure from Madrid, and which, since there was no longer any place in Spain where he could safely deposit them, were directed to proceed with all speed towards the French frontier; but the troops with which he was prepared to do battle for his kingdom still amounted to 70,000 veterans, and they had a magnificent artillery of upwards of 150 guns.

Wellington had pursued him with such rapidity that he was compelled to halt during the 20th, to give time for his columns in the rear to come up; and he spent the day in a careful examination of the French position, which he perceived to be very strong, though they had not taken the precaution of destroying any of the bridges in their front, of which there were seven; and the river was also fordable in many places. Powerful batteries, however, had been providently placed to command both bridges and fords; and it was evident that Jourdain confided in the strength of the ground to enable him to make a successful resistance, which was the more necessary as the retiring convoys filled the road in his rear for many miles, and would clearly prove a terrible impediment to a hasty retreat.

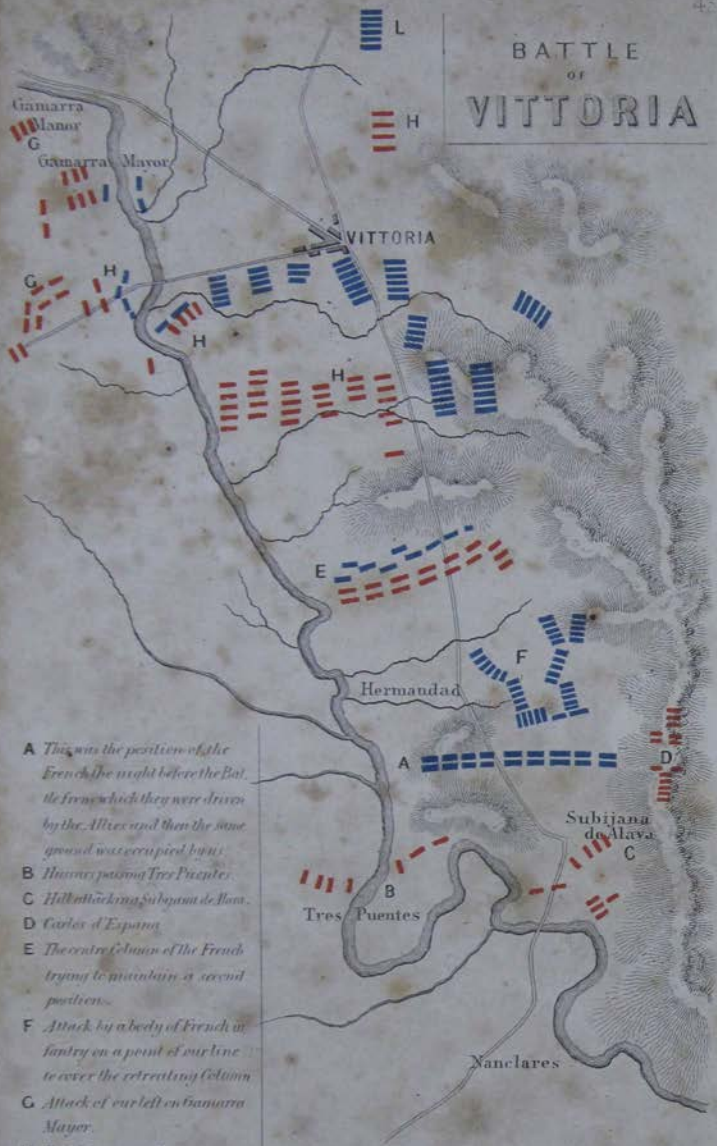
It was with great joy that Wellington perceived that the enemy were determined to stand their ground; and having completed his personal examination of every part of their position, he formed his plans for the battle,

determining to attack them in three divisions: Graham, as on the march from Ciudad Rodrigo, commanding the left wing; Hill the right; the centre was under his own direction. He had left one division at Medina, to protect the advance of his magazines; and the entire force which he could employ for the attack amounted to 60,000 British and Portuguese, with above 10,000 Spaniards;* so that in the number of his men he was about equal to the enemy, but inferior in cavalry, and far weaker in artillery, having but 90 guns, which were also of a smaller calibre than the French cannon.

At the dawn of day on the 21st of June, the allied army advanced to the attack. The morning was wet and misty (though later in the day the weather cleared), and it was ten o'clock before Hill began to cross the Zadorra at the village of Puebla, and to ascend the hills before him, which were held by the French left wing under Count Gazan. A stern combat ensued; and as Hill's division was necessarily a long time passing over a single bridge, some hours elapsed before he could gain any decided advantage; but at last, when all had crossed, he carried the village of Subijana de Alava, in front of the hostile line, and thus obtained an advantage on that side of the field which, in spite of repeated attempts, the enemy could never retrieve. It was somewhat later when Graham with the left wing advanced

* The exact force on each side is difficult to ascertain: Napier, v., 552, states ours at 80,000 men; but, p. 554, he calls the right wing 20,000, the centre 30,000, and the left wing 20,000, making in all 70,000. The French muster-rolls were lost in the battle. Napier conjectures their force to have been about 70,000 men. Wellington appears to have considered it slightly larger than his own; probably his numbers were rather the larger; though that advantage was counterbalanced by part of his troops being Spaniards, still in a very imperfect state of discipline; and by the great superiority of the French in artillery.

BATTLE of VITTORIA


L
H
Gamarra Manor
G
Gamarra Mayor
VITTORIA
G
H
H
H
E
F
Hermandad
A
D
Subijana de Alava
C
B
Tres Puentes
Nanclares
A The seats the position of the French the night before the Battle from which they were driven by the Allies and then the same ground was occupied by us
B Hussars passing Tres Puentes
C Hill attacking Subijana de Alava
D Cortes d'Espana
E The centre Column of the French trying to maintain a second position
F Attack by a body of French infantry on a point of our line to cover the retreating Column
G Attack of our left on Gamarra Mayor
H British pursuit
L French retreat

Vincent Brooks lith.

by the Bilboa road directly on the town of Vittoria, in front of which, on both sides of the Zadorra, the enemy had an apparently sufficient force of both infantry and cavalry posted on strong heights covering the villages Gamarra Mayor and Abechuco, and the bridges which crossed the river at that point. But Graham turned the heights with his Portuguese and Spanish divisions, which behaved with great gallantry throughout the day, stormed the villages with a British brigade, and drove the enemy back in confusion, taking several of their guns.

So rugged and broken was the country across which the British columns moved to the attack, that the proper communications between the several commanders were difficult and slow; and Wellington was not always able to ascertain in what state the battle was on either side of him. But justly confiding in the proved skill of his two lieutenants, he brought down the 4th and light divisions to the very edge of the stream, and there waited till Hill was in sufficient strength to assail the enemy at Subijana. Then, as soon as that general had made himself master of the village, Wellington led these and his other divisions across three bridges in their front, one of which (as a Spanish peasant had just brought him word) was left totally unguarded by the enemy, established himself immediately in front of the hostile centre, where the King himself was placed, and was preparing to attack him with his whole force, when Joseph, who had already somewhat weakened his division to support his wings against the vigorous attacks which Hill and Graham were making on them, abandoned his position, and began to retreat rapidly, but in good order, towards Vittoria, sending orders to Gazan on his left to retire in the same direction. Still for a while some of

the French divisions made a gallant endeavour to hold their ground; but presently they were overlapped by the victorious columns of the British advancing on both sides of them: the British batteries plied them in front; the light troops and riflemen poured in an incessant fire on their flanks, and they also were driven back, having suffered too much to preserve the same steadiness in their retreat as their comrades, who had been less exposed to so deadly a struggle. Still the subordinate French generals were gallant and skilful men, and with a heavy fire of their numerous artillery, and with clouds of skirmishers, strove manfully to check their advancing foes; but Wellington, whose eagle eye never saw more clearly than amid the smoke and confusion of the battle-field, directed one division under Lord Dalhousie against the flank of the still-resisting columns; sent Picton, the bravest of men, with another almost at a run to pierce them in front, and to carry the village of Arrinez, accompanying that division himself for some distance, restoring steadiness to some regiments that had got into confusion, and making them form in proper order before they came into close conflict with the enemy. The Life Guards dashed forwards in imposing array, and took their post on some level ground, waiting impatiently for the signal to charge; and though for a while the combat around Arrinez, which was the key of the French position, was stubborn and bloody, Picton's irresistible resolution at last prevailed; the 52nd, under Colonel Gibbs (for Colborne had not yet recovered from his wounds received at Ciudad Rodrigo), took the village of Margarita; the 87th, under Colonel Gough, the future victor of Aliwal and Sobraon, won the village of Hermandad; Hill at the same time having overcome all resistance in his front, began to advance from Subijana;

and at last the enemy retired in every direction, the victorious battalions of Wellington pressing them fiercely at every point.

Unfortunately, the nature of the ground, which was broken by woods, ditches, vineyards, and hamlets, prevented the British General from making use of his cavalry to increase their confusion. When they approached Vittoria, their generals collected some strong divisions on the last range of heights which the plain presented, and with batteries still equal to the whole of the British artillery, made one more fearless but hopeless endeavour to retrieve the fortune of the day, or at least to arrest the progress of their victorious pursuers, and so to afford the King and Jourdain a respite which might enable them to restore some kind of order to their broken columns. Vain were all their efforts. For a while, indeed, the foremost British divisions were delayed by the deadly fire of the well-placed and well-served artillery; but Wellington quickly turned the heights with the 4th division, and again the enemy were compelled to retreat, leaving the greater part of their guns. At the same time, or perhaps a little earlier, detached columns of Graham's division had gained possession of some villages behind Vittoria, which commanded the roads leading to the north-west, and had thus cut off the King's retreat in every direction, except towards Pampeluna. On that road, General Reille, who during the whole day had maintained a gallant resistance, and who, though gradually beaten back, still showed an orderly front to his conquerors, had placed a strong reserve, which covered the retreat of his comrades, and the darkness of evening now coming on (for the battle had lasted the whole day), soon gave them more effectual protection.

Such was the great battle of Vittoria. The loss of men in the two armies was not so disproportioned as might have been expected from the completeness of the victory. Our loss in killed and wounded amounted to nearly 5,000 men; and that of the enemy did not much exceed 6,000, and about 1,000 prisoners. But the trophies of the field were to be looked for, not in long lists of slaughtered enemies, nor in columns of captives, but in such a vast mass of spoil as never probably in the history of warfare had fallen to the share of a single army. The retreating enemy carried off in safety one gun and one howitzer. All the rest of their artillery and ammunition they left to their conquerors; 151 guns, 20 tons of powder, nearly 2,000,000 of cartridges and rounds of ammunition; and this was neither the largest nor the most valuable portion of the spoil. They left also the military chest, containing above 1,000,000*l.* of coined money; all their baggage; all the accumulated plunder that in the course of five years a court and an army unequalled for their shameless rapacity had been able to extract from a country at one time the wealthiest in the world, and, till the period of their invasion, preserving in the convents, in the churches, and in the private castles of the nobility, abundant tokens of its former greatness and opulence. Neither castles of men nor churches of God had proved any safeguard to the treasures which they contained. Pictures had been torn down from the walls; plate had been carried off from the altars; even tapestries and hangings had not been always beneath the notice of the spoiler. Soult and Junot had, indeed, long ago carried off their shares in safety; but the rest, now piled in several thousand waggons and carriages which blocked the road for miles all became the prize of the conquering army.

The plunderers had only been following the disgraceful example of their king. Joseph's own carriage was filled with many of the choicest cabinet pictures which the royal palaces of Madrid and the Escurial had contained; these fell into Wellington's hands, and he, being no great judge of such matters, looked upon them as curiosities rather than as treasures, and sent them to a picture-cleaner, designing to keep them as memorials of his triumph. When, however, his victories had replaced Ferdinand on the throne of his ancestors, and he had learnt from the report of the person so employed that their value was far greater than he had suspected, he requested permission to restore them to their original owners; but that prince, amply satisfied with the restoration of his crown, with graceful gratitude requested his deliverer to retain them; and many of them are now among the most exquisite ornaments of Apsley House.

There was other booty of even a less warlike kind; for the retreating host were not all steel-armed soldiers; many were champions of a softer sex, and of gentler weapons. According to the heathen fable, Venus had been the chosen object of the love of Mars; and her votaries had thronged in crowds to Madrid to reward with their smiles their martial countrymen, and many of them now were overtaken and captured. The ladies themselves the British chivalry at once released, but their baggage shared the fate of the rest. In the first confusion almost inevitably attendant upon the seizure of such a measureless quantity of spoil, it all, instead of, as should have been the case, being carried into the common stock, became the subject of promiscuous pillage; and the ladies' well-packed trunks were now ransacked by many a marvelling trooper and camp-

follower who had never before had unfolded to their view the varied resources in which ladies at times confide

To make them beautiful or keep them neat.

Soon feathers and laces, rouge-pots and washes, ringlets and pomatums, lay strewed over the plain; and at night there might be seen frolicking about the camp, in the exultation of their unparalleled victory, common soldiers in various disguises or unwonted employments. Some were arrayed in silks and satins; others had exchanged their schakos for turbans and plumes; some were playing with lap-dogs or pet monkeys; others were teaching parrots to exchange their French ejaculations for English household words of equal nationality; some again were revelling in champagne and claret; and others, who had been pillaging the money-chest, which had been speedily broken open, were staggering to their quarters under a vast weight of dollars, or bartering them at a most disproportionate price for more portable gold-pieces.

One portion of the spoil had no attraction for either masqueraders or money-changers, and an immense quantity of papers of great political and historical value, containing as they did the whole secret records of the French proceedings since their first occupation of Madrid, with numberless letters of Napoleon, and Joseph, and the French marshals, were preserved undisturbed, and were forwarded to England. The marshal's staff also belonging to Jourdain was taken by the 87th regiment, and presented to Wellington, who forwarded it, with the colours of one of the French regiments, to the Prince Regent of England, and received from him in return that of an English field-marshal, which had never

been more splendidly earned, or more gracefully bestowed.

Joseph himself had nearly been taken prisoner. He was fleeing in his carriage, when he found the road before him blocked up with waggons; and a squadron of British dragoons, led by Colonel Wyndham, followed so closely in his rear, that some of them fired at the carriage. He quitted it, changed his uniform for a nankeen jacket, and then, mounting a horse, escaped; but his chariot, with all his personal effects, and much select plunder, was seized and stripped of its contents.

The retreating enemy scarcely halted that night, but the darkness and the fatigue of the victors alike forbade any extended pursuit till morning. At daybreak, however, on the 22nd, Wellington, leaving a brigade at Vittoria and a division at Salvatierra, and detaching Graham towards Guipuscoa, followed Joseph with the rest of the army, in order to complete his expulsion from Spain before he could receive any reinforcements or supplies of ammunition sufficient to enable him to make a stand in the Pyrenees. He soon captured his remaining gun, and on the 25th arrived in front of Pampeluna, which he began at once to blockade; while Graham drove General Foy out of Tolosa, and occupied that town. Foy retreated towards the frontier, throwing as he passed a strong garrison of 2,600 men into St. Sebastian, who afterwards by their gallant resistance seriously impeded and delayed our invasion of their country.

Wellington left Hill in command at Pampeluna, and turned back himself to the south-east, hoping to fall in with Clausel, who, as he had just heard, was at no great distance with an army of 15,000 men. That general had been hastening to join the King, and had arrived

close to the field of battle, when, on the 22nd, he heard of his defeat, on which he retired to Logroño, and there halted two days for further intelligence. The first news which he received was that Wellington himself was descending on Logroño from Tafalla on the eastern side, with four divisions of infantry and some brigades of light cavalry; that two other divisions and the heavy cavalry were marching to the same point from Salvatierra on the northern side; while the guerrilla chiefs, Mina and Julian Sanchez, were collecting their forces at Estella, a town about half-way between Logroño and Salvatierra. Clausel saw his danger, and at once retreated along the Ebro, marching almost day and night till he reached Tudela, intending at that town to turn to the north, and make for the French frontier by the road through Tafalla. But even after he had thus marched sixty miles in less than two days, he would still have fallen into Wellington's hands, who was waiting for him at Tafalla, had he not received timely notice that his enemy was before him, on which he made a further retreat to Saragossa. At that city he destroyed most of his artillery and heavy baggage, and having thus disencumbered his army, he escaped to Jaca, at the foot of the Pyrenees. Wellington, since he could not overtake him so as to bring him to action, preferring to let him retire in that direction to driving him further to the south, where his division would have been a formidable addition to the army with which Suchet, the only French commander now left in Spain, was still maintaining the war in the lower part of Catalonia.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Disorder of our army—Murray's misconduct at Tarragona—The Ministry proposes to send Wellington to Germany—Napoleon sends Soult to Spain —Soult attacks Stewart's division at Maya—The battle of Sauroren.

WELLINGTON'S operations at this time were again seriously hindered by the scandalous state into which his army had fallen since the battle. If defeat had disorganized the French, victory had destroyed the discipline of the British soldiers in an almost equal degree. In former times the great Montrose, when leading armies of half-civilized Highlanders, had found his very successes injurious to him, from the eagerness of his men after a victory to return home to secure their booty. And now it seemed that rapacity and licentiousness had reduced the modern highly-trained British soldier to the level of those ancient undisciplined mountaineers. Wellington was indignant beyond measure at their conduct; he reported to the authorities at home, that till the entire system of the army was altered, so that all ranks should be forced to perform their duty, however great the victories which it might gain should be, no real good could be done. The late battle, he said, "had, as usual, "totally annihilated all order and all discipline. The

"very next day," he complained, "the men were inca-
"pable of marching in pursuit of the enemy, and were
"totally knocked up," because they had devoted the night "to looking for plunder instead of to getting rest "and food." He forbore to mention, as Napier does, that in many cases the officers had been as bad as the men. And now (he was writing on the eighth day after the battle) he affirmed that there were missing from the ranks "double the amount of our loss sustained on the "day; and that we had lost more men in the pursuit "than the enemy; though we had never in any one "day made more than an ordinary march."

The Spanish Government, too, annoyed him greatly by removing from their posts Castaños, and General Giron, his nephew, who had distinguished himself highly in the recent battle; appointing General Lacy to be Captain-General in Galicia instead of Castaños, because they believed him to be more unfriendly to the bishops, with whom they were at very determined variance, from their resolution to abolish the Inquisition, which the clergy desired to uphold, in which desire they were supported by the great body of the people. Besides the fact that such a measure was in direct violation of the engagements which had been made with Wellington when he consented to assume the command of their armies, he foresaw great evil from it, as being calculated to produce "a disturbance of his communications;" and saw that the effect of it would be to make "us "and the French change sides, as they would in future "have the clergy and lower orders in their favour."

Being anxious to deprive the French of every hold on Spain which they still retained, he was now desirous to lay siege to St. Sebastian, carrying on that operation concurrently with the blockade of Pampeluna: but he

found himself hampered by a new difficulty, very unusual for a British general; since, owing to some strange remissness or over-confidence on the part of the Admiralty, our naval force on the northern coast of Spain had been so greatly weakened that French privateers had taken many of our vessels, and had actually succeeded in sending reinforcements by sea to the garrisons which still remained to them on the northern coast. In short, till our communications by sea were secure, it was impossible for him to attack with the least probability of success a fortress like St. Sebastian, one side of which was washed by the sea at high water. He wrote at once to complain to the Secretary of State, remarking that it was the first time for many years that a British general had had occasion to feel uneasy about his communications by sea. Yet, strange to say, his remonstrances on this head were but little attended to; the French communications with the northern coast were scarcely disturbed; and the facilities thus given for the introduction of supplies into St. Sebastian caused serious delay and inconvenience to Wellington, and the loss of hundreds of valuable lives, which were sacrificed because the Mistress of the Seas could not spare a few frigates for the most important service at that time required of her whole navy.

He had at the same time another, and a less remediable cause of vexation. If ever his discernment as to the military capacity of others was at fault, it seems to have been so in the case of Sir John Murray, who had at all times shown himself an incompetent and irresolute officer, and who, having been sent to besiege Tarragona at the head of a force stronger by many thousand men than, according to Wellington's judgment, the reduction of that town, which was not very strongly

fortified, required, being seized with an unreasonable and unreasoning panic at a report that Suchet was advancing to relieve the town, raised the siege, and embarked his troops on board the British fleet in the offing; abandoning even his guns to the enemy, in spite of the opinion of Admiral Hallowell, a seaman of Nelson's school, that it was perfectly easy to carry them off. Wellington, who had expected great advantages from Murray's operations, was sadly disappointed at the failure, and deeply mortified at the disgrace thus brought on the British arms; while the mishap in some degree also affected his own operations, preventing him, as it did, from turning his blockade of Pampeluna into a more active siege, though the necessity which it imposed upon him of keeping all his best troops at hand, in case Suchet, being now released from all fear in Catalonia, should attempt to advance towards the frontier.

Wellington was not, however, one to waste his energies in unavailing regrets. The French, though two-thirds of their army had retired into their own country, had still left some divisions on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, in the rich valley of Baztan; but, by a series of skilful attacks made with Hill's division, he drove them from all their positions, and compelled them also to retire into France: and then he proceeded to the left of his army to secure his flank on that side by the investment of St. Sebastian. In the course of the second week of July, he commenced operations against that fortress, and as soon as Graham arrived, left him in command of the besieging force, and returned to the centre of the army, where affairs were taking a turn which threatened speedily to require his presence.

It is a singular proof how little the British Ministry were even yet able to estimate the real importance of

the effort which they were making in Spain, and the greatness of the services which Wellington was there rendering to the cause of Europe, that they actually at this time meditated removing him to Germany, to take part in the operations there, where the results of the recent battles had awakened a fear that the Russian and German generals were unequally matched against the genius of Napoleon. His own reply to the first intimation of such an idea, which he received from the Secretary of State, was characteristic at once of his sense of duty and of his modest judgment of his own achievements, while at the same time he did not conceal his disinclination to be removed from the scene where he had already gained such great glory, and where he confidently anticipated a further harvest of success. He replied to the Secretary of State, that "in regard to his "going to Germany, he was the Prince Regent's servant, "ready to do whatever he and his government should "choose;" but he represented, at the same time, that in his present situation he had great advantages, from having inspired those around him with a confidence that his measures were right, which he should neither carry with him to another country, nor be able to bequeath to his successor in Spain. "Many," he said (we scarcely know who could have been expected to agree with him), "might be found to conduct matters as well as he could, "either in Spain or in Germany, but nobody could enjoy "the same advantages in Spain which he enjoyed, while "he should be no better than any one else in Ger-"many." He therefore thought that "if it were in-"tended to keep a British army in the Peninsula, it was "best that he should remain with it."

At the same time, he endeavoured to give the Ministry confidence in the future, assuring them that he

could hold the Pyrenees as easily as in years gone by he had been able to hold Portugal. And, since it was well known that various propositions of peace were from time to time being made to the allies in Germany, he recommended them under no circumstances whatever to give up the Spanish provinces on the northern side of the Ebro to France; affirming that the Pyrenees afforded a far more defensible position than that river; and expressing his opinion that it would be better, with a view to eventual permanent peace, to have "Joseph King of Spain, "without any cession to France, than to have Fer- "dinand, with the Ebro as the frontier; in which case "Spain must inevitably fall into the power of the "French."

Very different from the judgment of the British Ministry was that which Napoleon formed of the greatness of the crisis in Spain, and of the importance to his fortunes of checking the victorious arms of the British in that kingdom. He was at Dresden when the news reached him of the passage of the Ebro by Wellington; of the overthrow of his troops at Vittoria he was still in ignorance, but, though he had no small need of the aid of Soult's vigorous judgment and profound military skill in the contest which he was preparing to maintain against the overpowering hosts of his allied enemies, yet, as he esteemed him by far the ablest of his marshals, he at once sent him to the Pyrenees, with the honourable title of Lieutenant of the Emperor, if possible to turn back the tide of war, now apparently approaching its spring, and threatening the French territory itself with no doubtful or feeble incursion. Nor was Soult blind to the greatness of the emergency. Travelling with unwearied rapidity, he reached the Pyrenees on the 12th of July, and assumed the command

of all the forces in that district, which he consolidated into one body, with the title of the army of Spain. There was now no French army of Portugal; that ancient ally of the British Crown had been delivered from all fear of the invader by the terrible blows dealt against him on her frontier in the preceding year. There was now no French army of the South; the same triumphs had restored to the inhabitants of those districts the peaceful cultivation of their fertile lands; the secure enjoyment of their sunny slopes and beaming rivers. There was now no French army of the Centre; the more recent achievements of the British deliverer had forced the usurper from the capital, and had driven him and his guards in headlong flight from the land. And the title now assumed by Soult for the army under his command was significative of its hopes, and not of its possessions; at present it marked the object of his enterprise; at a later period it served to indicate its failure: it was never justified by the undisturbed occupation for a single day of any position in the country the invasion of which had been Napoleon's most wanton crime, and was the greatest cause of his eventual downfall. It was still a formidable host that was ranged around the banners of its new chief; amounting, as it did, to above 100,000 men, besides the garrisons of Pampeluna and St. Sebastian, which were included in its muster-rolls, and which for many weeks did him good service by the occupation which they afforded to powerful divisions of the allied army.

He notified to the troops his assumption of the command in a proclamation intended to restore to them their former confidence. He did not deny to the British general the praise of prompt and skilful arrangements, nor to his army the credit of valour and steadiness; but he asserted

that their excellence was only a reflection of the example of the army which he was addressing; he imputed Wellington's recent triumphs to the timorous and pusillanimous counsels, and to the military unskilfulness of his late opponent, which had rendered useless the enthusiastic valour and fine sense of honour which inspired the army in general; and (forgetting, we may suppose, for a moment the circumstances under which four years before he himself had quitted Oporto) he asserted that "whenever the relative duties of a French general and "his troops had been ably fulfilled, their enemies had "commonly had no other resource than flight." To that resource the British and their allies were now to be driven. "The Emperor's instructions were to drive "the enemy from those lofty heights which enabled him "proudly to survey the fertile valleys of France, and to "chase him across the Ebro." He promised his troops the early relief of the beleaguered fortresses, and a speedy return to the Spanish soil, the plenteous resources of which were again to be placed at their disposal. The birthday of the Emperor was at hand; on that day, from the town of Vittoria, which should then become a name of happier omen to his armies, their valour should enable him to send to their sovereign the welcome intelligence of the retrieval of his honour and their own by the triumphant recovery of a Spanish province.

He proceeded without delay to endeavour to justify his confident language by corresponding action. Wellington's entire force was not greatly inferior in number to his, though scarcely more than one-half of his soldiers were British or Portuguese, and though it was weakened by the absence of the divisions employed against St. Sebastian and Pampeluna. So that even before he was aware

of Soult's arrival, he considered that "he was not so "strong on any point as he ought to have been." The French marshal, too, derived very important assistance towards his first operations from the nature of the country in which they were carried on. The Pyrenees, though full of strong positions, presented also an extraordinary number of passes, among which the assailant might take his choice, while the ground between them was so rugged and impracticable as greatly to hinder the divisions appointed to guard them from communicating with each other, even when separated by very short distances. Soult, therefore, could select his point of attack with almost a certainty of being greatly superior to the division with which he should be first brought into immediate contact. And he was not a man to let slip such an advantage.

He was unexpectedly favoured by the absence of Wellington, who had gone to St. Sebastian, where an attempt to take that fortress by storm had failed; and having collected his troops with great rapidity, he, on the 25th of July, attempted to force the British line of defence at two points—at the pass of Maya, and at that more celebrated defile of Roncesvalles, where a former French invader of Spain, under not very dissimilar circumstances to those of Napoleon,* was driven back in defeat and disgrace, leaving his most gallant Paladin, Orlando, the hero of Ariosto's great poem and of Campbell's Ode, dead upon the plain. The Spaniards, who on that occasion had wrought out their own deliverance, had erected a triumphal pillar to commemorate the

* Alonzo El Casto had made over Spain to Charlemagne somewhat in the same manner in which Charles IV. had given it to Napoleon. And in each case the people rose in insurrection against the foreign usurper, though in 778 they found a leader among themselves, Bernardo del Carpio, who slew Orlando in single combat.

discomfiture of Charlemagne, which the French had destroyed nearly twenty years before; but they had not been able to eradicate from the breasts of the peasantry the recollection of their ancient glories, and often during this autumn the villagers cheered on the British soldiers to victory, singing their old national ballads in praise of their native champion, Bernardo, whose doughty sword had overthrown the mirror of chivalry, the most renowned of the French warriors. Roncesvalles was guarded by a portion of Hill's division under General Byng not exceeding 5,000, having Cole, with 6,000 more, several miles in the rear. Against this small force Clausel marched with 16,000 infantry, besides cavalry and artillery, having General Reille also with an equal force at hand to turn the left of the British, while he himself was assailing them in front. The British, though greatly outnumbered, made a gallant resistance, but at last were compelled to fall back, though not without inflicting on their assailants a loss greater than their own. At the pass of Maya, the disproportion of the numbers of the forces engaged was less, but General William Stewart, who commanded at that point, allowed himself to be deceived and surprised by D'Erlon; and though he also lost fewer men than the enemy, he lost some guns, a circumstance which greatly annoyed Wellington, who was at all times very careful, even in his most difficult retreats, to avoid leaving the enemy such substantial trophies. His vexation on this head was removed by their recovery a few days afterwards, as the enemy had been unable to remove them; but he was greatly displeased at the result of both these affairs, thinking that Cole might have held his position in spite of his right flank being turned, and that he had retired very unnecessarily, and that Stewart had neglected the most

ordinary precautions. The valour of the troops, he considered, had remedied the blunders of their commanders, and he found in what had now occurred more reason than ever to doubt the result of all operations which he could not be present to conduct himself.

The advantage, however, thus gained by the French marshal was rather apparent than real. When Wellington asserted that he could defend the Pyrenees as easily as he had defended Portugal, he did not mean to say that any conceivable force was sufficient to guard all the passes through those mountains, of which there were not fewer than seventy, but that he could so delay and divide an assailing army as to give him time to collect his own troops behind them in a central position, which should then enable him to fight the invaders with advantage. And for such an operation he was now preparing, having three choice divisions in hand in the rear, on which he could speedily concentrate the rest of his army.

On the evening of the day on which these combats had taken place, he parted from Graham in front of St. Sebastian, and returned to his original position in the centre; and, as he went, gathering intelligence of the events which had taken place, and finding that in consequence of the enemy having forced the pass at Roncesvalles, Hill also had been obliged to fall back, so that his right was completely turned, he despatched orders to the different divisions to move towards Pampeluna, since the relief of that town was evidently Soult's first object; at the same time he sent back instructions to Graham to prepare to turn the siege of St. Sebastian into a blockade, and to be ready to join him with the bulk of his force in the event of a battle. Wellington was thoroughly acquainted with the country, having

with great personal labour examined the whole of it himself in the interval between Soult's arrival and his commencement of active operations; and this knowledge was now of the greatest use to him, enabling him so to direct the march of all his divisions as to prevent the slightest confusion among them (though the mountains were steep, the defiles narrow and broken, and the roads so rugged as to be very unsuitable for the conveyance of artillery), and at the same time to keep his communications with Graham perfectly open.

Full of eagerness and confidence, Soult followed the retreating army, and was pressing close upon the 3rd and 4th divisions, under Picton and Cole, when, on some commanding heights near Huarte, those gallant officers faced round and offered him battle. He could not venture to attack them in front, but, sending one of his divisions over the mountains to his left, and extending others to the village of Sauroren, on his right, he began to form his whole army in order of battle. It was past noon on the 27th, and Wellington, who in the morning had been with Hill's division, on his extreme right, was hastening back to the scene of more immediate action, when he heard that Picton had been driven back to Huarte. He instantly stopped the advance of his troops, who were moving in that direction down the narrow valley of Lanz, and galloped himself to Sauroren with such speed that only one of his aides-de-camp could keep up with him. Here, seeing the position that Soult had taken up, he halted for a moment, and wrote fresh orders with his pencil on the parapet of Sauroren bridge, which he sent back by Lord Fitzroy Somerset. So short was his time that he had scarcely finished them when the French entered at the other end of the village. Lord Fitzroy galloped out by another road, and Welling-

ton rode alone up the mountain to join the troops there embattled. The enemy in front of them were 25,000, and they themselves were less than half that number, but not one of them doubted that his presence made them more than equal to their enemies. Those who first saw him hailed his arrival with an exulting shout, such as greeted Marmion * at Flodden. It was caught up by regiment after regiment, and the whole mountain rang with acclamations which were heard far beyond the French lines. What general could have been insensible to such tokens of the confidence and affection of his followers? Wellington was certainly not of such a disposition: satisfaction warmed his heart and beamed in his eye, and at the same time he calculated that these inspiring shouts, which had ever been harbingers of defeat to the French, would inspire their commander with apprehension, and make him suspend his operations to ascertain their cause.

So near were the two armies at this moment that he could even distinguish Soult's features; and he halted for a few moments in a conspicuous place, desiring that the French marshal should see him also, and being urged to increased caution by the knowledge of his presence, should give him time to bring up more troops for the coming conflict. Probably he succeeded in his object, for beyond an unsuccessful attempt to gain a hill near the centre of our line, which was occupied

* "Thanks, noble Surrey," Marmion said,
Nor further greeting there he paid,
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
When such a shout there rose
Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.—MARMION, c. vi.

by some Spanish battalions, Soult made no effort that day.

Wellington had hoped to be joined by the 6th and 7th divisions in the course of the night, but a tremendous storm, such as is not unusual in those mountainous districts, delayed their march, and at daybreak on the 28th they were still some miles distant. Soult knew that they had not arrived, and also that they might be speedily expected, and resolved on an instant attack upon the troops in front of him before they should be thus reinforced. It was on the same morning, four years before, that Victor had advanced against the British army at Talavera, and had learnt that it required a greater superiority of numbers than he possessed to counterbalance the superiority in skill of the British General; and the remembrance of their former victory was well calculated to inspire our men with additional confidence on so glorious an anniversary. Soult's preponderance of strength enabled him to assault our line on both flanks and in front at the same time, and his men advanced gallantly to the attack; but they had hardly begun to make any impression on our left, when a portion of the expected 6th division reached the field of battle, and drove back the French columns in that quarter, though the superior numbers of the enemy saved them from suffering more loss than they inflicted. For many hours the struggle was very severe. Wellington afterwards declared that he had never seen such resolute fighting on both sides, and pronounced it to have been "bludgeon-work." He had not long before described his own men to the ministers at home as "an unrivalled army for fighting;" and they now abundantly proved the justice of his eulogy.

As usual, the General was not wanting to the soldiers:

he was everywhere, exposing himself more than was quite prudent in one on whose life so much depended; but resolute to make up for the disparity of his numbers by the greatness of his own exertions. Wherever the French attacked with unusual force, or threatened to make head even for a moment, at that spot was he with piercing eye, with unruffled presence of mind, and with instant and vigorous decision, bringing forward fresh brigades to repel their charges; and on no one was his example thrown away. The Portuguese again showed themselves deserving to stand beside their British comrades; the Spaniards caught the contagion and behaved with unusual steadiness; and at last the French retired from the blood-stained hill, and the battle ceased. Each side had lost between 2,000 and 3,000 men; and the next day both armies rested in inaction, recruiting their strength for further conflict.

Soult had found that he could not force his way to Pampeluna; but from intelligence which reached him that Graham had withdrawn his men from the Bidassoa, he conceived a hope that he might possibly be able to relieve St. Sebastian, which was a place of still greater importance; and on the evening of the 29th he began cautiously to move some of his divisions in that direction; but in the course of the night he heard from some British soldiers who had just deserted that Wellington was about to make a movement at daybreak to turn his right. Being thus warned of his adversary's design, he was doubly vigilant, and on the morning of the 30th, as soon as he saw some of the British columns in motion, apparently with the object which had been betrayed to him, he hastened to join D'Erlon, who was commanding in that direction, with the intention of overwhelming the advancing enemy by the superiority of his numbers,

for D'Erlon's division was nearly twice as strong as Wellington had supposed it to be, numbering as it did at least 20,000 men, while Hill had not above 10,000 to oppose to them. After a time Hill was driven back, and Soult began to entertain hopes of being at once able to force his way to St. Sebastian, when he heard that a far more serious contest was raging on the ground which he had quitted; for Wellington had not confined his views to turning him on the right, but at the same time had sent Picton against his left, while other divisions assailed Foy, who was moving towards Sauroren, and he himself directed a still more formidable attack on the village, which was the key of the whole French position. Every one of these attacks, and above all that which was directed on Sauroren, succeeded most completely. The divisions posted there being assailed at once in front and flank were driven from the village with the loss of 1,400 prisoners, and Foy's division of 8,000 men was forced back by Picton, and being completely separated from their comrades, retired in a state of isolation towards the frontier.

The victory had been complete and important: the loss of the enemy in killed and wounded was not very much greater than ours, but they also lost 3,000 prisoners. Their army was dislocated; some of their divisions were completely disorganized; and Soult's hopes of relieving either Pampeluna or St. Sebastian were entirely and finally frustrated. Wellington bestowed the highest praise on his soldiers, whose valour, he said, had driven the enemy "from a position which "was one of the strongest and most difficult of access "which he had ever seen occupied by troops." But in reality the praise was due chiefly to his own masterly dispositions, as it had been quite a contest of skill, and

the soldiers had been encouraged by seeing that their commander's arrangements, as at Salamanca, had insured the victory before a blow was struck.

All Soult's plans had wholly failed, and he had but one line of retreat left to him. He was always prompt in his resolutions; and after having given his troops a few hours' rest, he started at midnight for the pass of Doña Maria. But Graham, with 20,000 men, was ready to fall upon him in that direction; and the light division, which during the preceding operations had missed its intended line of advance, had fortunately on the morning of this same day established itself in a position which menaced his flank on the line of retreat which he was compelled to adopt. Wellington himself crossed the mountains at Bellatte, near the head of the valley of Lanz, in order to cut the French marshal off from Elizondo and the valley of the Bastan, and at the same time sent Hill with a sufficient force to press upon his rear. Both he and Hill had skirmishes with the enemy, in which the loss in killed and wounded was not considerable, but in which the British commander took many hundred prisoners and some large stores of provisions and ammunition; and as the French were by the result of the operations on this day, the 31st of July, cut off from Elizondo, Wellington conceived hopes of striking an unparalleled blow, when his reasonable anticipations were frustrated by one of those miserable accidents which so often in war confound the wisest plans, seeming to justify the rash in their temerity and the cautious in their resolution to trust nothing to so capricious an arbitress of their designs as Fortune.

Hill, after a skirmish with Soult's rear-guard, had in pursuance of his orders moved in a lateral direction over the mountains to join Wellington; and Soult, finding

himself no longer pursued by him, had halted at St. Estevan, in some uncertainty as to the movements of his enemy, and as to his own plans. Wellington had reason to believe that he had him in a net. St. Estevan lies in a deep and narrow valley, and half the British army was already behind the mountains which overlook the town, wholly screened from the sight of the French, though Wellington himself was able to overlook all their movements. Another British division, on the mountain of Doña Maria, cut off all retreat in the rear, a third was blocking the defile of Maya, and Graham was hastening to stop the remaining passes from the valley which lead to Echallar and to Vera. Had he reached them, the French would have been deprived of all possibility of escape, and Wellington, seeing his prey almost within his grasp, took every precaution to prevent Soult from suspecting the presence of himself or of any British troops on his side of the town; but he had not yet been able to eradicate his soldiers' inveterate propensity to pillage. He was only waiting for intelligence of Graham's arrival at the expected point—the bulk of his division had begun to comprehend his design and to share his hopes,

> Watching their leader's beck and will
> All silent there they stood, and still—

when three wretched marauders, thinking their temporary inaction a favourable opportunity, quitted their ranks and entered the valley below in search of booty. The sight of the scarlet uniforms they were thus disgracing gave the alarm, they were intercepted and brought to Soult, and their replies to his questions at once revealed to the astonished marshal the extent of his danger, and the only path open to his escape. Instantly he began to retreat towards Sumbilla, on the

Bidassoa, and Wellington was thus robbed of the unprecedented glory of compelling the surrender of a marshal of France and his whole army.

The retreat, however, of so numerous a body of men along one narrow line was free from neither suffering nor disaster. From the commanding heights on which they stood, our regiments poured upon them a deadly fire, to which they could make no reply. Prisoners and baggage were left behind at every step; the British light division, having made a wonderful march over the mountains, though the weather was so oppressive that many of them actually died of exhaustion on the way, headed them at Yanzi, a village with a bridge over the river some miles below Sumbilla. General Charles Alten, who commanded it, had not skill to make the most of his position, but still he inflicted heavy loss upon the bewildered French, who now moved northwards towards Echallar, the road to which village he had left open to them. There again Clausel's division was attacked, and so completely had the spirit of the French been broken by the events of the last four days, that they were driven from a position which at other times would have been almost impregnable in their hands by one fourth of their numbers.

Yet again, such are the chances of war, that these discomfited battalions had nearly made a prize which would have more than counterbalanced all the disasters of their army. Wellington, who had been riding in advance of his troops, had dismounted, and was seated on the ground examining his maps, when a French detachment came upon him so suddenly that he had barely time to mount his horse and gallop off, while the disappointed assailants fired a random and fortunately unsuccessful volley at him and his escort as they fled.

Had he been taken or slain, there can be no doubt that Soult would have at once resumed the offensive, and on the result of the campaign under circumstances so changed it is hard to speculate. Still fully equal in numbers to the forces of the allies, and far superior in military genius to any other of their commanders, he might perhaps have re-entered Spain, have saved St. Sebastian and Pampeluna, have prevented the invasion of France, the defeats of Nivelle, of Orthes, and of Toulouse, and still have presented to his imperial master an army which might have saved his crown and enabled him for years to come to disquiet the world with the mighty struggles of his insatiable ambition. Happily for Europe, Providence ordered it otherwise. No further blows were struck on either side, and Soult retired again across the frontier into France, having in nine days suffered a loss which, though never known with precision, cannot be estimated at less than 15,000 men; more than double that which he had inflicted on his enemy; having been compelled to leave to their fate the beleaguered fortresses which he had striven so hard to succour, and instead of re-establishing the imperial standards in Spain, being forced to turn his meditations to the means by which he might best avert or repel the invasion to which he could not doubt that his own country was at no distant moment to be exposed.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Siege of St. Sebastian—Question of invading France—Wellington is made a Field-Marshal—Siege and Storm of St. Sebastian—Spanish ingratitude—Pampeluna surrenders.

WELLINGTON'S first measure on the retreat of the enemy was to re-establish the siege of St. Sebastian, which he purposed to carry on now with increased vigour. His army was but little impaired in strength by its recent exertions, for though some hundreds had been killed, and some thousands wounded, yet the sound of active war had brought back so many stragglers to their colours that, on the 3rd of August, he could muster within 15,000 men of the numbers which he had had with him a fortnight before. He was, however, prevented from making any forward movement in the field, for some days by the exhaustion of his musket ammunition, by the want of stores for many of his regiments, and by a severe attack of rheumatism which confined him for a time to his quarters.

His successes had now raised a very general opinion that he might at once invade France; and he could not come to a decision on the question without taking into consideration, not only his own military position and

resources, but also the state of political affairs in the north of Europe; and his own often expressed opinion that sound sense was better than brilliant talents had never more occasion to be exemplified by his own practice than now, when called upon to determine on the propriety of at once carrying his victorious arms across the French frontier. Many circumstances contributed to allure a man of less clear and firm judgment to such a step. It would have had a most brilliant appearance thus to crown the triumph of Vittoria and the more recent victories over Soult with the invasion of the territory of the enemy, and to compel that marshal, instead of announcing to his emperor on his birthday that he had recovered a firm hold in Spain, to report to him that the British leopards, as he affected to term the armorial ensigns of England, had fixed their claws deeply in the soil of France, now no longer inviolable. It would likewise have appeased in some degree the highly-wrought expectations of his own followers, some of whom were so extravagant in their fancies as to think "that he might be at Paris in a month." The Royalist party also in France, which had naturally gained strength from the difficulties by which Napoleon was surrounded both in Spain and in Germany, were eager for his presence in their country; and the Duc de Berri now wrote to him, proposing to join his army, and to place himself under his command with 20,000 men, who, according to his statement, were ready organized, and even armed, in order to act with us.

Wellington, however, was superior to all personal vanity; he was equally unmoved by the unreasonable hopes of ignorant people, whom, in fact, no success would have satisfied. It was little exaggeration to say, as he said soon afterwards, that "if he had done all that

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"had been expected of him, he should by that time "have been in the moon." And though his opinion was "that the interests of the house of Bourbon and of "all Europe were the same, namely, in some manner or "other to get the better of and to get rid of Napoleon, "and that though it might be a question with the house "of Bourbon whether they would involve their partisans "in France" in the existing uncertainty of affairs in Germany, and of the intentions of the allies in that quarter, it could be "none with the allies whether they "would receive such assistance;" and moreover, "since "the power of the French emperor rested internally "upon the most extensive and expensive system of "corruption that ever was established in any country, "and externally upon his military power, which was "supported almost exclusively by foreign contributions," that therefore, "if he could be confined to the limits of "France by any means he must fall;" he nevertheless decided against entering France at present, and according to his usual custom, set fully before the ministers at home the reasons which had influenced him in adopting this resolution.

He pointed out the desirableness of first reducing the frontier fortresses of Spain, of which the French still had possession; the inevitable deterioration which his army had suffered during a campaign in which "it had made "such marches and had fought such battles;" and the consequent necessity which existed of allowing a little time for its recovery from its fatigues, for the renewal of its equipments, and for the formation of fresh magazines. He reminded the ministers that France was a country "in which everybody was a soldier, and where the whole "population was armed and organized" under persons who had all had practical experience of military service.

That he could enter France at once he had no doubt, but he had also none that "if peace should be made with "France by the powers of the north, Napoleon would at "once bring an increased force against him, and com- "pel him to withdraw again into Spain, which would be "a difficult operation. He was not inclined to allow his "movements to be influenced in the least by the transac- "tions of the allied powers, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, "in Germany, where he could see no concert in the ne- "gotiations for peace," and no sense of the expediency, not to say necessity of making common cause with one another, and still less with England and Spain; but only unreasonable and selfish views, "which could not be "reconciled to the general interest." Such a state of affairs, he declared, would not warrant him "in moving a "corporal's guard," and he resolved therefore to be guided solely by "the convenience of his own operations."

He had, as has been mentioned, after Soult's repulse at once recommenced the siege of St. Sebastian; but he was unable to press it vigorously for the want of ammunition, which he did not receive till the last week in August; while, in spite of all his indignant remonstrances, which were backed by the representations of Lord Keith, the admiral on the station, the Admiralty neglected to send an adequate naval force to support his operations. The French Admiralty was not equally remiss; and though Nelson's victories had long since driven their fleets from the open sea, and though Cochrane's brilliant daring had shown them that even their own harbours were no protection to them, they profited by our supineness to keep up a constant communication with St. Sebastian, introducing supplies of all kinds and reinforcements into that fortress, to menace and often to intercept the supplies for our army which were

sent from Lisbon, Oporto, and Corunna: and even when a convoy did arrive in safety, the generals were forced to hire Spanish women to row the harbour boats by which the stores were unloaded and conveyed to the shore.

Amid all this annoyance one circumstance at this time pleased Wellington greatly, namely, the grant by the Government of pensions to the officers who commanded the artillery at the battle of Vittoria; and his reply to the letter announcing to him this act of judicious liberality was couched in terms which showed that he considered rewards bestowed on his deserving officers as favours conferred on himself. He said truly, that "no "reward was ever better deserved; that the public money "never had been laid out to greater advantage;" that it "would excite hundreds to exertion;" and he thanked the minister for it, as a measure which had given himself the greatest personal satisfaction. Yet while he was thus grateful for distinctions conferred on his officers, he had in no degree altered his opinion that they were valueless when extorted by solicitation; and he refused at the same time the request of one of his most distinguished generals to interfere to procure for him a mark of favour to which that officer conceived himself to be entitled; stating his own opinion, that no favours, or honours, or distinctions could be acceptable unless they were conferred spontaneously: he therefore recommended his correspondent patience, and "a continuance of his efforts to deserve, as he had "hitherto done, the honourable distinction to which he "aspired, certain that if the Government were wise, he "would obtain it;" and assuring him that he was only advising the adoption of conduct which he himself had always practised, since, "notwithstanding the numerous "favours he had received from the Crown, he had never "solicited one; he had never hinted nor would any of

" his friends or relations venture to hint for him, a desire " to receive even one; and much as he had been favoured, " the consciousness that it had been the spontaneous act " of the King and Regent gave him more satisfaction " than anything else."

He had, as has been already mentioned, lately received a distinction which he himself valued highly, promotion to the rank of Field-Marshal, which was the act of the Prince Regent himself, who sent him the staff which is the ensign of that rank, accompanied by a letter, in which he proclaimed Wellington's merits to be far above any praise or recompense which he could bestow on them; acting on this occasion in defiance of the judgment of the Duke of York, who, though generally a sagacious, enlightened, and most judicious military reformer, yet objected to creating a Lieutenant-General a Field-Marshal over the heads of all his senior officers as a step without a precedent, forgetting that his exploits were equally without example. He also received at this time a more intrinsically valuable reward from the Cortes of Spain; who not only created him a grandee of the first class, but granted him also a valuable estate in Granada which had belonged to Godoy. He accepted both the honour and the estate, though the revenues of the latter, according to the disinterested rule which he had imposed upon himself, he paid into the public treasury of the country while the war lasted; and for them, and for the manner in which the Cortes had conferred them, " most honour- " able and gratifying to his feelings," he expressed his sincere gratitude; but he would probably have been still more pleased had they shown their sense of his services by following his advice, and remedying the evils of which he still incessantly complained, and which, in fact, grew worse and worse daily.

The Spanish troops were improving rapidly in discipline and efficiency: he was now able to trust them for important operations, yet so neglected were they by their Government, that at this moment "they were actually "starving." As far as lay in his power he had aided them with money and provisions from his own magazines; but, "notwithstanding this assistance, he had had "the mortification of seeing them obliged to plunder the "nut-trees and apple-trees for subsistence, and to know "that the Spanish troops employed in the blockades of "St. Sebastian and Pampeluna were starving upon half an "allowance of bread, while the enemy whom they were "blockading were at the same time receiving their full "allowance." Wearied out by the misconduct of the authorities, and by their systematic violation of all their engagements with himself, he at last, at the end of August, formally resigned the command of their armies, in the expectation, in which he was not deceived, that this step would in some degree bring them to their senses; though he had no hope of any solid improvement while the present form of Government existed in Spain; and he even consulted his own Government whether, since it was plain that at present we had no influence over the Spanish councils, if he should find an opportunity of striking a blow at the democracy, they would approve of his doing so. At the same time he gave a singular and most honourable proof of his unwillingness to make unnecessary complaints, and of his eagerness to recall such when made under erroneous impressions; for, having complained at the end of June that Clausel had been enabled to escape from him in consequence of information of his movements which had been furnished by the Alcalde of Tudela, and, having subsequently discovered that the person who had made

this charge against the Alcalde had confessed it to be a calumny, he at once addressed a letter to the Spanish minister at war, avowing that he had been deceived, and requesting that this avowal might be published in the Gazette, in order to make all the reparation possible to the accused magistrate, by giving to the admission of his innocence the same publicity which had been given to the accusation.

The period of rest given to the army during the first weeks in August had a most beneficial effect: the soldiers recovered their health; and numbers of the wounded men quitted the hospitals and rejoined their ranks, though the strength thus gained was in some degree neutralized by the great number of desertions which at this time took place among our troops, and which Wellington pronounced to be "terrible and quite unac-"countable." His own suspicion was that the foreigners, of whom at this time there were very many in our ranks, and who were always prone to desert, enticed the British soldiers also to follow their example; but that consideration did not at all diminish the disgrace of the fact, nor the inconvenience of it, since the deserters betrayed to the enemy, not only the state and position of our troops, but at times also the orders which they had received, and the expectations and plans of the General.

At last, late in August, the long-looked-for artillery and ammunition arrived; and immediately the engineers, often working under Wellington's personal inspection, commenced the erection of heavy batteries. On the 26th they opened their fire, which soon began to tell with fearful effect on the towers and walls opposed to them. St. Sebastian stands on a narrow neck of land, washed on the west by the sea, and on the east by the Urumea, a small stream fordable at low water, but at high water reaching up to

the very walls of the fortress; while at its northern extremity rises a steep hill, called Monte Orgullo, on which is a small castle, and which at this time was further protected by some batteries and redoubts erected on the seaward side. Opposite to this hill, at a distance of 300 or 400 yards from the land on the western side, lay also a small island, known as Santa Clara, which was likewise occupied by a strong redoubt. The siege in general was conducted by Graham; but there were few days on which Wellington himself did not visit the works; and the batteries nearest to the enemy's defences, and which, as being so, of course contributed most to their destruction, were planned by him. The island Santa Clara was taken on the 27th, and its occupation greatly facilitated the progress of the besiegers. By the 29th most of the guns of the garrison were silenced; and on the 30th, Wellington, eager to lose no time, gave orders to storm the place the next morning. It was an operation which could only be executed at low water; since, when the tide was in, the sea came up to the walls, and rendered them inaccessible.

The governor, General Rey, a worthy comrade of Philippon and Du Breton, foresaw the impending assault, and almost despairing of being able to resist it, so greatly had his garrison been thinned by the terrible fire of the last four days, sent a messenger to Soult to obtain his last orders. The indefatigable marshal bade him hold out to the last, assuring him that he would endeavour to succour him with his army; and relying on his promised exertions, Rey resolved to make a manful struggle for the preservation of the place.

Soult was never the man to belie his word; and was the more induced to hope for success in his enterprise by the fact that the covering army consisted only of

some Spanish divisions under the command of General Freyre, who occupied the heights of San Marcial on the left or Spanish bank of the Bidassoa, and the town of Irun, by which ran the road leading from the French position to St. Sebastian. Since his repulse at the beginning of the month, Soult had received very considerable reinforcements, and, without weakening his more inland line of defence, he was able now to bring 45,000 men against the left wing of the allies. At dawn on the 31st, 15,000 men, under Reille, crossed the Bidassoa in front of San Marcial, while a force of almost equal strength under Clausel forded the river nearer Vera, some miles higher up the stream, to attack two brigades of British and Portuguese troops which were posted at that point: the two columns hoping to meet at a town called Oyarzun, about half way between Irun and St. Sebastian, and then with their united strength to force their way to the relief of the beleaguered garrison. The division opposed to Clausel were so inferior in numbers to their assailants that they were obliged to fall back to some stronger heights in their rear, on which all further attacks of the French were fruitless: but at San Marcial the ground was stronger, and the Spaniards, encouraged by the presence of Wellington himself, fought with such brilliant gallantry that he had no occasion to bring to their aid two British divisions which, in anticipation of some such attack, he had previously posted in both their flanks. He had praised them before, and now gladly took the occasion to improve their confidence in themselves by showing them that even unsupported they could repel the French; and to such a height had he raised their spirit that they in their turn became the assailants, and, not satisfied with repulsing the enemy, drove them down the heights to the river, in which many of them

perished, the pontoon boats sinking under the multitudes which overcrowded them in their confused retreat.

Thirty-five thousand French had thus been repulsed by little more than 10,000 of the allies; and had suffered a loss falling little short of 4,000 men. Soult now withdrew his discomfited troops back to his own side of the Bidassoa; and from henceforth made no further offensive movement, but directed all his efforts to strengthen his own position, and, as long as might be, to prevent any advance of the enemy into the French territory. Even had he been victorious in these conflicts, he would scarcely have been able to save St. Sebastian, for the same day Graham carried that fortress by storm, after difficulties sufficient to appal even the conquerors of Badajoz. The breach which had been effected, though apparently extensive, was most deceptive. Behind the greater part of it lay a sheer descent of twenty feet, so that it was only penetrable at a single point so narrow that it could not be entered except by soldiers in single file. The opening, such as it was, was guarded by the bravest men of a garrison where all were brave, who kept up so ceaseless and deadly a fire that no man approached it and lived. It was in vain that fifteen of the most gallant regiments in the British service had furnished men of the most desperate valour for the storming party; led by Colonel Hunt, Colonel Cook, Major Robertson, and Major Rose, some of whom had borne their share in the conquest of Ciudad Rodrigo and of Badajoz; while the others proved themselves worthy comrades of the more experienced leaders. All who reached the summit fell; and those who were driven back to the lower part of the breach were exposed to a deadly fire of shot, grape, and musketry from every part of the walls which commanded their position. It was equally in vain that at another

point General Leith led on the 5th division till he fell severely wounded; and that at another Major Snodgrass and Colonel Macbean conducted an equally gallant force of British and Portuguese across the small river in their front, and assailed a less extensive breach nearer the sea. Everywhere a terrible carnage thinned the ranks of the allies, and the shouts of the garrison began to rise in notes of tumult, when, as a last resource, Graham directed his batteries to reopen their fire, and again to batter the great breach, though the foot of it was only a few yards above the heads of the stormers who had been driven down from its summit. Then at last the slaughter of the garrison began to equal that of the assailants: fortune favoured the audacious conception of the British general, as the cannonade set fire to a quantity of powder and combustibles behind the breach, blowing them up with a tremendous explosion, and with them a large portion of the wall and hundreds of its gallant defenders.

Then the stormers returned to the assault, and the diminished numbers of the French were no longer equal to the encounter. One strong body was cut off and made prisoners in an advanced hornwork; and it was with but a small remnant of his men that the still undaunted governor retired into the castle on Monte Orgullo, near the end of the small peninsula on which the town stands, and endeavoured to prolong the resistance. The rock on which the castle stood was high and steep, and, besides its own batteries, it was supported by some redoubts and outworks which were daily supplied with ammunition brought by sea, of which for the first time for many years we were not the masters. Wellington visited St. Sebastian the day after its capture, and directed the construction of fresh batteries, which soon rendered the castle untenable. Rey offered to surrender

the place on condition of being allowed to enter with his troops into France; a proposal which of course was peremptorily rejected, and after enduring the fire of the besiegers for a day or two longer, he capitulated on the 8th of September, obtaining from Graham's generosity such honourable terms as that commander justly thought he had deserved by the gallantry of his defence.

Our loss in the siege had been very serious, amounting as it did to above 2,500 men. But the importance of the acquisition, as setting free the future movements of the allies, and by securing Wellington on the western side of the Pyrenees, giving him a firm base for his future operations, was very great. It is painful to a British historian to be forced again to record that in one respect the conquerors did not deserve their success, but that the same troops who had shown such heroic valour in the assault of the town, tarnished the glory they had won by the most wanton destruction of property, and the most brutal outrages upon the citizens, who, as at Badajoz, were natives of the country of which they professed themselves the champions. Some of the Spaniards, including even some of the nobles and ministers who ought to have known better, afterwards libelled the commanders themselves, affirming that they had permitted the misconduct of their men out of a spirit of commercial revenge, because the town had been wont to trade exclusively with the French. Wellington repelled the charge with great indignation, and also conclusively proved that a great deal of the destruction complained of had been caused by the French while they were still in possession of the town. He had, as usual, carefully abstained from the use of mortars or howitzers out of regard to the inhabitants, though he had afterwards found that they were not entitled to any

such consideration at his hands, since the greater part of them had cheerfully co-operated with the French garrison, and had borne of late no trifling share in the slaughter inflicted on our men. He had, however, abstained from any bombardment of the town; and a conflagration, which had been very destructive, had commenced the day before the assault, and had been seen by the besiegers while still in their trenches; having originated in all probability in some of the measures taken by the French for their defence, and having been increased by the terrible conflict which raged along the streets for some time after our troops had effected their entrance. But he admitted with sorrow that great injuries had been scandalously inflicted upon the inhabitants, though he exculpated his officers, who had made the greatest efforts to save them, and many of whom had fallen by the hands of their own men in making those efforts; and himself also, showing that he had withdrawn the misbehaving troops as early as possible, though the fierce conflict in which the whole of his left wing was engaged on the same day prevented him from doing so till the day but one following the assault, by which time order had been restored.

The capture of St. Sebastian enabled him to reconsider the question of the invasion of France. One of the chief objections to his taking such a step at an earlier period had been derived from the state of affairs in Germany; where, during the months of June and July, there had been an armistice between Napoleon and the allies. But on the 10th of August the armistice had been broken off, and Austria, whose movements and intentions had for some time appeared very suspicious, had at last thrown off her vacillation, had united herself to the allies, and had declared war against the French

emperor; so that Wellington was now relieved from all apprehension of the employment of any additional French force in the south of France.

It is curious to note how reciprocally the events in Spain and Germany had during the summer acted on one another. The battle of Vittoria had had a great share in determining Russia and Prussia to maintain the firm attitude which they had assumed during the negotiations at Pleswitz, and in inducing Austria to give in her secret adhesion to their side; and the news of the battle of Sauroren, and of the complete repulse of Soult from the Spanish soil, which reached Vienna a day or two before the termination of the armistice, put the coping-stone to their resolution to exert their whole strength in the coming struggle; while, on the other hand, the renewal of the war on that side of Europe gave Wellington confidence to invade France, even before Pampeluna had fallen, and while Suchet still maintained the superiority in Catalonia over the intriguing vacillation of the Spanish generals and the unskilful courage of Lord W. Bentinck.

Not but what one less confident in his own resources than Wellington might have hesitated on other grounds also before involving himself in so arduous an undertaking as the invasion of a country in which, as he had said before, "every man was a soldier." For intrigue was as rife as ever in Portugal and Spain. In the former country, the partisans of Souza, always disposed to be jealous of the British, gained additional courage from the entire removal of the war from their own frontier to multiply their intrigues; and even De Forjaz, whom Wellington considered the ablest statesman in the Peninsula, had begun to play into their hands, from a foolish desire to obtain the command of the Portuguese

army, an office for which he was wholly unqualified. And with this view he had begun to express, and to stimulate others to echo discontent, at the slight mention of the Portuguese troops in the British gazettes; and to urge the Regency to demand a separation of their national army from ours, with which, as has been mentioned, it had hitherto been constantly brigaded, in order that its achievements might thus be more prominently brought into notice: they grumbled also at the Spaniards, who had, as they affirmed, a much greater interest now in the war than themselves; but whose exertions they pronounced quite inadequate to the largeness of their state.

Wellington had no difficulty in pronouncing a most positive opinion against the separation of the armies; though being anxious at all times to increase the confidence of the Portuguese in themselves, and also their reputation in foreign countries, which, as he truly said, "was in itself strength," he wrote to the Ministry to request that their services might be specially mentioned on the first occasion of any parliamentary vote of thanks being given to the army. At the same time, so dangerous did the state of feeling at Lisbon appear to be, that, with his concurrence, Beresford repaired to that capital, in order to impose what check he might be able on its irrational outbreaks.

In Spain, the authorities, making the outrages committed at St. Sebastian their pretext, libelled him without restraint, and General O'Donoju, the minister at war, went so far as to suspect his political honesty, and to hint that some of the movements of the Spanish armies which he had directed had been made with a view to distress, not the enemy, but a political party in Spain. Wellington condescended to explain his objects

to him with the most unreserved candour, but perceived that the Don was still in doubt whether he "was a "perfectly honest man or a very great rogue;" while, respecting that minister's character, he himself was in no such uncertainty, but described him on more than one occasion as "the greatest of all blackguards."

Nor was Spain the only country in which libels against him were published, though elsewhere they were of a less vexatious character. One was put forth about this time in an Irish newspaper, which must have caused him amusement rather than annoyance, announcing, as it did, that he had agreed to change his religion, and become a Roman Catholic, in the hope of being elected king of Spain, and that Castaños had undertaken to procure the consent of the grandees to this project; while some of the principal Spanish nobles showed their practical wisdom, and their just appreciation of his character, by publishing a formal disavowal of their having been of the number of those grandees who had given their consent to such an arrangement. In England also, the losses incurred in the assault on St. Sebastian in July, coupled with its unsuccessful result, had again warmed into life the croakers and disparagers of his success, and had made him feel that caution was as necessary to him as ever, and that the loss of a single brigade might still produce such a clamour at home as would quell the resolution of the Ministry, and produce the abandonment of the war, in spite of all its past triumphs and of the prospect, now almost assured, of continued and eventual success.

The reverses which the allied armies had experienced in Catalonia, and the return of Lord W. Bentinck to Sicily, had made him for a moment hesitate as to the expediency of first repairing to that province, and

endeavouring to put matters there on a better footing before he entered France; but he decided against such a step, partly because he could neither afford the means nor the time to do much good there; and partly because, looking at the state of affairs in Germany, he considered the existing crisis evidently one in which purely military views should be made to bend in some degree to political objects. He explained his notions on this subject with great clearness to his old correspondent, General Dumouriez, stating, at the same time, that he was not sure whether, even if he regarded nothing but military ends, it would not be more desirable for Spain itself, to say nothing of the allies in Germany, that he should advance into France than "carry on a war of "fortresses in Catalonia;" since, "if it were true, as it "appeared to be, that Napoleon was in difficulties on "the Rhine, and if he himself should also press him on "the side of the Pyrenees, the French emperor could "not possibly find means of reinforcing his troops in "Catalonia, where the fortresses must consequently fall "of themselves." He was aware also, from other sources besides the communication which he had received from the Duc de Berri, that a strong party existed in the south of France itself who were eager for his advance into their country, some being actuated by feelings of loyalty to their ancient line of sovereigns, which they had preserved amid all the horrors and changes of the Revolution, and some being merely desirous to get rid of Napoleon, from impatience of the conscriptions by which he was draining the population of the country to satisfy the cravings of his restless and unsatiable ambition. Therefore, after a full consideration of all the circumstances of both Spain and France, he determined to disregard Suchet's operations and the continued re-

sistance of Pampeluna, the fall of which, since it was vigorously blockaded on all sides, was only a question of time, and at once to cross the frontier and invade France.

The blockade he entrusted to Carlos D'España and the Spanish troops, and he was well satisfied with the zeal and ability which they showed in carrying it out. The French garrison by the beginning of September was reduced to scanty rations of horse-flesh, and often to far more unpalatable and unwholesome food; but they supported their privations with a cheerful countenance; and when a party of our officers was sent with a flag of truce into the town, to invite the governor to surrender, they attempted to conceal their daily fast by setting white bread and champagne before their guests. The visitors, however, were possessed of too accurate information to be thus deceived, and intimated to their entertainers their suspicion that the mess of the private soldiers was supplied on a very different scale.* Contrary to all expectation, the governor, an officer of the name of Cassan, held out till the end of October; and even then he began to run mines under the works of the fortress, threatening to blow it up, and to endeavour to break through the lines of the blockading force, as in a former year Brennier had done, when he escaped from Almeida. Wellington, who had been greatly provoked by the success of Brennier's enterprise, and who probably thought it unsafe to trust to the vigilance of a Spanish general in a case similar to that in which a British officer had so signally failed, desired to prevent any such attempt being made; and pretending to look upon the destruction of a fortress when no longer tenable as a violation of the usages of war, sent orders to D'España, in case

* Larpent, ii. 135.

Cassan should put his threat into execution, and damage the works, to put him and his officers to death, and to decimate the rest of the garrison.

As the threat of the governor had only been designed to induce the besiegers to grant them better terms, so we may well suppose that that contained in these orders of Wellington's had no other object but to show him that no resource was left to him but unconditional surrender; since it is wholly inconsistent with the humanity of which the British commander at all times set so conspicuous an example, to suppose that he would have failed to recoil with horror from so barbarous a measure as the massacre of unresisting prisoners for an act which they would have been perfectly justified in attempting, and for which none of them but the commander could have been considered in the least responsible. Indeed, Wellington wrote to Hope at the same time, that he looked upon the mines as merely intended to frighten D'España into granting the garrison a capitulation, since too much publicity was given to their construction to allow him to suppose that any other use was intended to be made of them; and he conceived also that the privations which the garrison had hitherto undergone must have reduced their strength too much to enable them to support the fatigue of an escape over such mountains as lay between the town and the frontier. Still it would have been better if he had forborne to retaliate a justifiable by an unjustifiable menace, since he not only gave a handle to the enemy to revile him as capable of actions of atrocious inhumanity, but perplexed even some of his staunchest admirers, who, thinking him serious, have faltered in their language respecting his threat, being ashamed to justify what, for the sake of his great achievements, they were unwilling to condemn.

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The treatment which the garrison when subdued really received showed how entirely foreign to his noble nature was the harsh treatment of a gallant enemy. At last, on the 31st of October, the fortress surrendered, and the garrison, consisting of 3,000 men, became prisoners of war, by his permission obtaining most honourable terms from D'España, in consideration, not only of their brave and resolute defence, but also of the humanity and kindness with which they had treated the Spanish inhabitants of the town.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Wellington invades France—A fierce combat on the Bidassoa; the French are defeated—Wellington establishes severe discipline—He defeats Soult on the Nivelle—Is in great want of money, and of naval forces—He sends the Spanish troops back to Spain.

SOME weeks, however, before Pampeluna fell, the British army had been established on the French soil. Wellington had not been able to effect this operation quite as soon as he had intended, having been delayed at first by some mistakes committed by the officers of engineers about the pontoon train, and after they were remedied, by a continuance of bad weather, which affected the state of the Bidassoa, and by considerations respecting the tide which came up that river to a point far higher than that at which he designed to cross. At last the rains abated, and the 7th of October was fixed for an enterprise which Napier pronounces to have been "as daring as any undertaken during the whole war." And truly such it was. When a few months before he waved his farewell to Portugal, no obstacle barred his progress, but he was advancing into a land of allies, every portion of which was well known to him, and of which many spots invited and encouraged his approach by the memorials they afforded of his former triumphs. But now he was about

to force his way into a strange and unknown country, in which a general of the most renowned skill, and a numerous army planted among its own countrymen, had been for many weeks employed in raising all the barriers to his advance which art could suggest, in a region of which the natural difficulties alone presented no trifling impediments to the conveyance of the artillery, stores, baggage, and all the numerous equipments which encumber the progress of a modern army. The ground behind the Bidassoa was stronger far by nature than that which in his own hands had been made impregnable at Torres Vedras; the mountains were higher and more rugged, the rivers more numerous, deeper, and more rapid: and Soult had skilfully availed himself of the advantages thus placed at his command, entrenching a strong camp looking down upon the river, fortifying many of the commanding points of the mountains with redoubts, and blocking up the easier passes and roads with abattis and breastworks manned by formidable batteries.

In one respect the resistance which Pampeluna was still making was favourable to Wellington's design, by causing Soult to believe that his preparations, of which the French had tolerable information, were intended to prevent any renewed attempt on their part to raise the blockade. The fact also, that not only was it easier to pass the Bidassoa at a distance from the sea than at its mouth, but also that a movement on that direction was best adapted to place the British army on its true line of operations for a permanent invasion of France, assisted to mislead the French marshal in his calculations as to Wellington's real plans; and consequently, though they were betrayed to him by more than one party of deserters, he contented himself with enjoining the officers of his different divisions to watch the southern bank of the

river with greater vigilance than ever, and took no steps to increase his strength at those points which the traitors had truly indicated to him as the destined objects of the British attack.

One of the most important points in the French line of defence was a lofty ridge, inclining backwards from the Bidassoa, which it almost touched at the point where the entrenched camp before mentioned had been constructed; known as Mont Mandale at its southern extremity, as the Great Rhune at its northern eminence, and as Mont Bayonette in its centre. The entire chain was about eight miles long; and Wellington's plan was to drive the French from every part of it, and to occupy it himself, while at the same time he crossed the Bidassoa below the French entrenched camp, and thus permanently established his whole left wing in the territories of France. A day or two before he had received a considerable reinforcement of fresh troops from England, and, what he valued equally with many men, he had been joined by Sir John Hope, who, being senior to him, had been prevented by the rules of the service from bearing a share in his earlier campaigns, but who the moment that that obstacle was removed by his promotion to the rank of Field-Marshal, generously made an offer to serve under him, which was eagerly accepted by Wellington, who considered him by far the ablest officer in the army; and he now came to replace Sir Thomas Graham, whom a complaint in the eyes compelled to return to England.

As had so often happened before, the coming conflict was heralded by a violent thunder-storm, which lasted the greater part of the night of the 6th, and to which the French on this occasion were more exposed than ourselves. At daybreak on the 7th of October, Wellington took his post on the heights of San Marcial, on the south-

ern side of the Bidassoa, on which Soult had made his ineffectual attack five weeks before, and which were now armed with strong batteries of guns and howitzers commanding the opposite bank of the river; and the troops, leaving their tents standing, the longer to conceal their operations from the enemy, moved forward to their destined points of attack. In seven vast columns they reached the bank of the river, now become fordable by the ebbing of the spring tide, and entered the water before the French had recovered from their surprise at the unexpected apparition. On the extreme left, between Mont Mandale and Irun, Graham, performing his last duties with the Peninsular army, conducted the first and fifth divisions to the northern side, and then, directing one part of his force against the hostile entrenchments erected on a small mountain called the Croix des Bouquets, opposite to Irun (in the assault of which, the 9th regiment, under Colonel Cameron, particularly distinguished themselves) and with another part assailing the works at the right extremity of the entrenched camp, in spite of a most vigorous resistance on the part of the French, carried their position at both points, driving out the troops which held it with the bayonet, and capturing the guns with which the works were armed.

Meanwhile on Graham's right a Spanish brigade under General Freyre turned the left of the entrenched camp, and easily carried the works which crowned Mont Mandale, and which (so little had Soult expected an attack upon them) were occupied only by a single battalion; and in the British centre around Vera, the light division and a brigade of Spaniards under General Louga met with equal success, though the position in their front was the most formidable in the whole line of the French defence, both by nature and from the number

and strength of the works which the enemy had constructed there; and though Clausel, the moment that he perceived it to be in danger, hurried from the Rhune with a strong battalion to support the divisions to which its defence had been entrusted. But the 52nd had never found their match during this war, and now under Colborne they once more asserted their glorious invincibility, driving back the French who with a fierce bayonet charge had gained a trifling advantage over the riflemen of the brigade, carrying redoubt after redoubt, and breaking the spirit of the enemy so completely that at last 300 of them laid down their arms to Colborne himself, who, with a slender escort of an aide-de-camp and half a dozen privates, unexpectedly crossed their line of retreat.

On the extreme right, the Spanish general, Giron, with a division of the Andalusian army, attacked the works on the Great Rhune; but the mountain was lofty and steep, and on its summit stood an ancient hermitage, which now became a fortress almost impregnable. The day closed before the conflict on this side was terminated, but the next morning, Wellington, having crossed the Bidassoa and reconnoitred the mountain in person, directed a renewed attack against the western side of the mountain, where it was more accessible, and thus forced the French to abandon the hermitage, and to retire to other heights in the rear, on which for the present he was contented to leave them.

The loss on the side of the allies, which scarcely exceeded 800 men, was nearly doubled by that of the enemy, although, from the nature of the conflict, a very opposite result in that respect might have been anticipated; but Wellington's success on this occasion is not to be measured merely by the number of guns and prisoners

which were its trophies. In less than two days he had driven Soult from a position which that commander had spent several weeks in fortifying; and of which the natural strength was so great, that in the hands of defenders as skilful as its assailants it would have been impregnable. But this also was, as Napier declares, "a "general's and not a soldier's battle. Wellington had, "with overmastering combinations, overwhelmed each "point of attack;" and he had thus, with comparatively trivial loss, secured himself a position from which he could not be driven if it should become necessary to remain on the defensive, and from which he could securely advance whenever he should judge it desirable to resume offensive operations.

For he did not design to make any further attempt against Soult till he should hear of the fall of Pampeluna; and he now detached Lord Aylmer with a small brigade of the first division to assist the Spanish troops which were engaged in the blockade of Santona, a small but well-fortified port a few miles to the east of Santander, which had lain too much out of his line of march to be attacked in the early part of the campaign, and which, being now completely isolated, he did not think worth the trouble of an active siege.

His first care, now that he was solidly established on the enemy's soil, was to repress the spirit and habits of pillage to which his troops were still too much inclined to give way. Before quitting Spain, he had complained in the strong language which he was apt to employ both in praise and in censure, that the troops which he commanded "were the greatest blackguards on the face of "the earth, and that they required a hand of iron to keep "them in order." And he had been greatly disgusted at hearing "sad accounts" of their conduct in this way on

the 7th, and at seeing himself some of his men coming in "drunk and loaded with plunder." It was evident that such practices, though perhaps hardly so shameful in the country of an enemy as in that of an ally, would be far more dangerous; and that the necessity of conciliating the inhabitants was more imperative than ever where they were naturally hostile to the troops employed amongst them, than where they might be presumed to be friends if unprovoked. Accordingly he declared that even were his army "five times stronger than it was, he could not "venture to enter France if he could not prevent his "soldiers from plundering." And he instantly issued two general orders to his troops, indignantly reproving them for the outrages which they had already committed; announcing his resolution to send to England with a special report of their misconduct some of the officers to whose culpable neglect of their duty he attributed it; expressing his "particular desire that the inhabitants "should be well treated, and private property respected;" and reminding them that the most severe of the distresses which had befallen the French in the Peninsula "had "been occasioned by the irregularities of their soldiers, "and by the cruelties authorized and encouraged by their "chiefs towards the peaceful inhabitants of the country." He warned the Spaniards and Portuguese, that "to re-"venge this conduct on the peaceable inhabitants of France "would be unmanly and unworthy of them;" he bade them recollect that "they were at war with France solely be-"cause the ruler of the French nation would not allow "them to be at peace;" and he insisted on the most implicit obedience from every rank, declaring that "he "was determined not to command officers who would "not obey his orders."

He further enjoined the commissaries to observe the

most careful punctuality in making regular payments, or in giving receipts to the natives for all the supplies which might be brought in; and a few days afterwards he issued a proclamation to the French also, announcing to them that "he had given the most positive orders to "his troops with a view to prevent the evils which are "commonly the result of the invasion of a country by "a foreign army;" assuring them that "he would en- "force their execution;" and inviting them "to arrest "and bring to his head-quarters all who should violate "them." Admonishing them at the same time that, in order to entitle them to the protection which he was thus prepared to afford them, they must on their part remain quietly at home, "and take no part in the ope- "rations of which their country was about to become the "theatre."

Both sides soon found that he was in earnest: of his own troops he executed several who were detected in acts of pillage, without regard to the nation to which they belonged; he brought several officers to trial by court-martial, by whose sentence they were dismissed the service; and he paid with such regularity for the provisions which the natives brought to his camp, that they were soon led to contrast his conduct in this respect with that of the commanders of their own armies, from whom in general they could obtain neither money for their goods nor attention to their complaints, and in consequence to prefer supplying his forces to those of their own countrymen.

Wellington now fixed his head-quarters at Vera; and Soult, who had been joined by such considerable reinforcements that, in spite of the great losses which he had incurred since his assumption of the command, he had still nearly 80,000 men, without counting the garrisons

of Pampeluna and Santona, and who expected soon to be joined by fresh battalions, though they would consist chiefly of new levies, employed the leisure which his adversary now afforded him in entrenching several strong camps, and constructing great fieldworks to cover St. Jean de Luz on the north side of the Nivelle, and the whole line of that river, on which he designed to make his next stand; and, to provide for the event of his resistance there proving unsuccessful, he also began to entrench a formidable camp around Bayonne. Wellington's force was about equal in numbers to his, and he also expected to be strengthened by D'España's Spanish division as soon as it should be set free by the inevitable fall of Pampeluna.

Meantime, the progress of affairs in Germany, where the improving prospects of the allies made it probable in Wellington's opinion that they would soon be able to drive Napoleon to the Rhine, and to force him to make peace on their own terms, rendered it necessary to proceed with great caution. He doubted whether he should greatly benefit the general cause by a further advance unless he could "bring Soult to a general action, and "gain a complete victory, which the nature of the country "would scarcely admit of." And he rightly judged that to be forced to retire after having advanced would be far worse than to have abstained from advancing.

He was also in uncertainty with respect to his position with the Spaniards. They had accepted his resignation, but the moment that they had done so they seemed to repent of their conduct, though they showed their vexation chiefly by writing him impertinent letters. A new Cortes had lately been elected, but he saw little reason to expect from them a line of conduct different from that pursued by their predecessors, though he

thought that they began to be a little alarmed at the effect which their recent proceedings had produced in England. He advised his brother Henry, who was still our ambassador in Spain, to treat them with as much coolness as possible, thinking that while they behaved to him and to the army as they did, "we were bound to have "no communication with them that was not absolutely "necessary for the purposes of the war." At present, as they had taken no steps to appoint a successor to him, he still held the command of their armies; and in the beginning of December they solicited him to recall his resignation; granting, in profession at least, all his demands, and pledging themselves that there should be no repetition of the conduct of which he had with such reason complained.

Before the end of October he received intelligence of some successes gained in Germany by the French, which he soon saw reason to disbelieve, and which in fact was wholly untrue; and information, which was better founded, of Bavaria having united her interests to those of the allies; and having taken into consideration the condition of his own army, which was now greatly improved in subordination and good conduct, and in all other respects was in the highest possible state of efficiency, and having made a most careful examination of Soult's new position, he resolved to attack him the moment that Pampeluna fell. As has been already mentioned, that fortress surrendered on the last day of the month; but at that time the weather was so bad, with heavy storms of rain and snow, that for some days all active operations were rendered impossible. By the 5th of November the weather cleared, and the next day he began to put his army in motion.

Again Soult received warning from deserters of the

impending advance, and in consequence he erected fresh redoubts and entrenchments to prevent the passage of the Nivelle at the Bridge of Amotz, which he imagined would be the principal object of the British attack; and he likewise greatly strengthened the divisions which were posted in that quarter; while he moved forward Foy's division to Bidarray on the Nive, with the intention that that general should be able to reinforce D'Erlon if too strongly pressed, or (if, as he rather hoped, D'Erlon should prove in no need of his support) to fall upon the right flank of the allies while they were fully engaged with the force in their front. He gained one day's respite by a return of the stormy weather; but the 10th was again fine, and on that morning he was attacked at all points by the finest army which Wellington had ever yet had under his command: it numbered about 90,000 men, and exceeded its enemies by more than 10,000. Still that disparity of numbers was fully counterbalanced by the natural strength of the French position, and by the numerous fortifications of every kind which Soult had so skilfully employed his recent leisure in erecting. Reille commanded the French right, which extended along the left or southern bank of the Nivelle as far as St. Jean de Luz. The left wing, which reached from Bidarray to St. Jean Pied de Port, a village higher up the Nive, was under D'Erlon; and the centre, which was strengthened by some strong fieldworks between Amotz and Ascain, a village lower down the river, and which was also covered by the Lesser Rhune, a mountain between those works, and the Great Rhune, which Wellington had won in the battle at the passage of the Bidassoa, was entrusted to Clausel. Of the British army, Hill as usual commanded the right wing; Hope the left wing. In the centre was Wellington

himself, with the main body, which he could employ as a reserve in any quarter in which greater strength might be required; and with him was Beresford, to whom the actual leading of any portion so employed was to be entrusted.

Wellington judged that the right wing of the enemy was too strong to be assailed without great loss, and he resolved therefore to force the centre of Soult's line, and then to compel Reille's retreat by establishing himself in his rear, while at the same time a combined attack by Hill and Beresford should drive back D'Erlon, separate him from Clausel, win the bridge of Amotz, and thus gain entire command of both banks of the river. As before, so skilful had been his combinations that his attacks succeeded at all points almost as soon as they were developed. Some of the troops who had the most extensive space of ground to traverse were put in motion soon after midnight, and at dawn of day, which, however, at that season scarcely took place before eight o'clock, the whole army commenced the attack upon the enemy's position. The British and Portuguese had been taught by a long series of uninterrupted triumphs to look upon failure as impossible; and the Spaniards were scarcely less confident, encouraged by their recent success on the Bidassoa and before Pampeluna; by the liberal praises which the British general had judiciously bestowed upon them; and by the reliance which he displayed in their prowess, as evinced by the honourable posts which he had assigned them in the coming struggle, to show themselves worthy of their comrades, of their leader, and of the glorious cause in which they were to fight, which was no other than the consummation of the deliverance and future independence of their country. Against such foes the French soon found that mountain and river, batteries and entrenchments formed but a feeble defence.

Cole with the fourth division stormed the redoubts in front of Sarre; General Charles Alten with the light division drove the enemy from the Lesser Rhune, though no less than three strongly fortified castles bristled one above another on its precipitous ascent; and then these victorious troops, joining with other divisions, among whom Giron's Spanish regiments held an honourable place, made themselves masters of the village of Sarre, and of a large body of prisoners; having thus completely broken through the enemy's defences in that quarter.

Nor had Hill worse fortune on the right; his divisions, the second under Sir W. Stewart, and the sixth under Sir H. Clinton, with a Portuguese brigade under Sir John Hamilton, crossed the Nivelle, and carried all the redoubts and entrenchments that opposed their progress on the right bank of the river. And as soon as the heights on both sides of the stream were in our possession Wellington moved down his troops in irresistible strength along both its banks to St. Pè, a village a couple of miles below Amotz, crossed the bridge at that place with two more divisions, carried the heights beyond, and thus completely established himself on the rear of the French right division, which, without striking a blow, was thus compelled to evacuate its position, and was thankful to the shortness of the days, which allowed it to escape under cover of the darkness across the bridge of St. Jean de Luz. Heavy rain came on again at night, and prevented any rapid or extended pursuit of the beaten enemy, though Hope followed Reille through St. Jean de Luz, and though Beresford led the centre of the army on their traces with all practicable speed; and on the evening of the 11th Soult retired with his whole army across the Nive, and occupied a fresh camp, which he had previously entrenched at Bayonne.

He had suffered a terrible and unexpected defeat; not indeed bloodless, for his conquerors had lost upwards of 2,600 men, though the killed bore an unusually small proportion to the wounded. But his own loss in killed and wounded exceeded this, and Wellington had also taken 1,400 prisoners, upwards of 50 guns, and all the French field magazines. Soult had reckoned securely on a very different result. He had been labouring for three months at the lines from which he was now driven, and had flattered himself that they would prove as impregnable as those of Torres Vedras had been found by Massena. The entrenchments held by the divisions of Clausel and D'Erlon he had pronounced so strong that Wellington would be unable to force them without a sacrifice of 25,000 men; and he had placed equal reliance on other portions of his defence. His subordinate generals had shared his confidence, and laid the blame of their discomfiture on one another, comforting themselves with the discovery of every reason but the true one, the superior skill with which they had been attacked. Nothing but the shortness of the wintry days saved them from a far heavier loss, by enabling their right wing to retreat unmolested before the British divisions could be brought against them in sufficient force to cut them off.

The weather also came to their aid. Wellington would have desired to follow up his advantage the next day, by forcing the passage of the Nive and attacking them in their new camp before they had recovered from the discouragement of their defeat, and while his own troops were inspired with more than even their usual courage by their recent victory. But again the rain fell heavily, swelling the fords and making the roads impassable for an army, and he was forced to content himself with destroying a bridge over the Nive at

Cambo, which was important to the French in case they should by any means become strong enough to resume the offensive, and then put his troops into cantonments till the return of finer weather.

He was in high spirits now with the general efficiency of his own troops, whom he declared to be in a better condition for a winter campaign than he had ever seen them; though to those who looked more at their appearance and less at their substantial qualities of endurance and resolution, they seemed to be fallen off in no inconsiderable degree since the beginning of the campaign. Not only were their uniforms in the most tattered condition, often showing their legs and arms through the rents and holes, which of course they could not help, but they had become so round-shouldered and slouching in their gait that he laughed himself at their unsoldierlike air, saying that if they could be reviewed on Woolwich Common in their present state, they would all be at once sent to drill as quite unfit for service.* Fit for service, however, he knew that they were; and while they kept themselves so, and did their duty, he was content, and did not care to harass them by exacting attention to matters which had no real bearing on their efficiency.

From the same observer † who has recorded these particulars we also derive a very fair notion of Wellington himself at this period. We see him, not as heroes are sometimes imagined or represented, apparently overwhelmed with his vast cares and responsibilities, and giving evidence by every look and gesture of the greatness of the qualities which enabled him to encounter them, but a plain man of cordial manners and unembarrassed air, alike free from all pride, whether of birth or of

* Larpent, ii., 212. † Larpent's 'Diary.'

position, and from the official affectation of incessant devotion to business and duty: a dignified commander when exercising command, at other moments a frank and friendly comrade, a cheerful and most agreeable companion.

In height he was rather above than under the middle size, slightly but strongly built, with a very neat figure, a high forehead, a prominent and sharply-arched nose, and a blue eye of great brilliancy, which preserved its keenness of vision till near the end of his life. In decision he was quick and unhesitating, as was needful in one the success of whose enterprises was liable to be affected by circumstances often changing with every hour: in his opinions somewhat positive and peremptory, as was not strange in a commander of 100,000 men; if he was occasionally hasty in expression it was pardonable in one loaded with so many cares and annoyed by so many blunders; yet in the moments of his sharpest irritation, and even on occasions of settled displeasure, he was ever anxious as far as possible to avoid hurting the feelings of those whose misconduct had excited it; to make every allowance for all faults which proceeded from any source but a deliberate contempt for the rules and discipline of the service; and ever ingenious in finding reasons for blaming himself rather than others. Exercising a well-ordered and most constant and liberal hospitality, at such times of private intercourse with his officers he banished all constraint by his own unaffected frankness of demeanour, naturally indeed leading the conversation, but more because he was the ablest and best informed man at his table than because he was the commander; sharing freely in all the jokes and mirth of ball, banquet, or hunting-field, yet at the same time preserving always that dignity of character that made it impossible to take liberties with him.

He was still inconvenienced by the want of a sufficient naval force on the coast, and also by a want of money, which, if it continued, must, as he wrote to the ministers at home, prevent him from advancing further into France, from the impossibility of restraining the army from plunder, unless he were himself enabled to supply its necessities. His own troops, he reported, including the Portuguese, had at last been broken of their propensity to pillage, and they had reaped the fruit of their good conduct in the friendly treatment they had experienced from the natives, who seemed actually "to wish "us success, affording us all the supplies in their power, "and exerting themselves to procure us intelligence." But with the Spaniards the case was very different; their lust for plunder was sharpened by their desire to revenge the injuries which they themselves had suffered, and by the exhortations which every individual among them was constantly receiving by letter from his friends at home, enjoining him to make his fortune now that he was in France. Accordingly they committed numerous acts of outrage. Wellington at once took the strongest measures with them; some who were taken in the commission of acts of violence he executed on the spot; and he wrote to their generals, urging them to keep entire divisions under arms for days at a time as the most effectual means of punishing and preventing such crimes. He declared that "he had not exposed thousands of "officers and soldiers to wounds and death merely to "enable their surviving comrades to pillage the French." And at last, finding that the Spanish generals were either incapable of comprehending his feelings on the subject, or were, perhaps, tainted in some degree by the same revengeful spirit as their men, he actually sent 25,000 of the Spanish soldiers back into Spain, because (much as

his success depended on his strength) he was convinced that it depended far more "upon moderation and justice, "and upon the good conduct and discipline of the "troops." We may probably look in vain in the history of the world for another general who, for such a cause and at such a time, would thus have voluntarily deprived himself of the services of a fourth part of his army.

And if he was dissatisfied with the conduct of the Spanish soldiers everywhere but on the field of battle, he was, as he had often been before, still more dissatisfied with that of their civil authorities, which had gradually grown worse and worse. They had implored him to resume his command of their army, while at the same time they showed the worst possible feeling towards his own, urging the inhabitants not to furnish him with supplies, even for ready money; and, when compelled to provide hospitals for his wounded soldiers, wishing to dismantle them of the necessary accommodation which they grudged to our men, though, as he indignantly remarked, "their own wounded and sick had been taken "into our hospitals, and had received every service in our "power to render, after we had recovered their country "from the enemy." So deeply was he impressed at this time with their unfriendly disposition, and with the danger which might possibly result from it to his army in the event of his sustaining any reverse, that he recommended his own Government to insist upon a British garrison being admitted into St. Sebastian, that he might have that fortress as a secure point of retreat, and to withdraw the troops altogether if that demand should not be complied with.

There were others besides the Spaniards discontented at the protection which Wellington afforded to the private property of those Frenchmen who were not concerned in

the war as soldiers, and at the latitude with which he interpreted the expression. Several French vessels had been lying in the harbour of St. Jean de Luz when, in consequence of the victory of the Nivelle, that town fell into our possession; and Lord Keith, who commanded the fleet on that station, desired to have them considered as prizes, and then claimed a share for his fleet, of which Captain Collier's squadron, which to a certain extent was co-operating with Wellington, formed a part. Wellington, though no one would have been so great a gainer as himself by such a claim being admitted, resisted it vigorously; admitting, indeed, that the proclamation which he had issued, promising protection to private property, could have no validity unless it were sanctioned by the Prince Regent; and also, that when he issued it, the case of ships in the French ports had not entered into his contemplation. But he greatly questioned whether the fleet could on the present occasion be considered as having "been engaged in a conjoint expe- "dition with the army;" he asserted, as a matter within his own knowledge, that the people of the district had believed his proclamation to apply to their ships as well as their property on land; and he urged so vigorously the benefit which would accrue to the general cause from acquiescing in this interpretation of it, that the Ministry adopted his views; and even Lord Keith himself consented to withdraw the claim which he had advanced.

He showed his disinterestedness at the same time in another manner equally and perhaps even more worthy of admiration if carefully considered. As far as he himself was concerned, nothing could be so desirable as a continuance of the war, which, from the proved superiority of himself and of his soldiers to their adversaries, might be expected

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to insure to him a succession of fresh triumphs: and yet he desired its termination. A few days after the last battle he sent to the Secretary of State a carefully-considered account of the feelings of the French in that part of the country, as far as he had been able to ascertain them. He reported their cordiality towards himself so great, that "in no part of Spain had the army been better, or, "he might say, so well received;" and that they entertained a fixed desire to get rid of Napoleon, "from a conviction that as long as he governed France "they should have no peace." But at the same time he declared that there was no feeling in favour of the House of Bourbon, the princes of which had been absent so long from the country that they had become quite "unknown to France;" so completely so, indeed, that the French would be willing to accept any sovereign whom the allies might propose "instead of "Napoleon, who must be got rid of if it were hoped or "intended that Europe should ever enjoy peace; and that "it was not material whether he were of the House of "Bourbon or any other royal family." Napoleon himself he was "more convinced than ever had no adherents "but the principal officers of his army, those holding "civil employment under his government, and possibly "some of the new proprietors." Yet, "notwithstanding "this state of things, he recommended the ministers to "make peace with him if they could acquire all the "objects which they had a right to expect," since, if he should be found to have learnt moderation from his late reverses, he was "probably as good a sovereign as we "could desire in France." So candid was his appreciation of the better portions of Napoleon's character, and of his genius for government as well as for war; and so mistaken are those who, from the strong expressions

which he occasionally used in denouncing the system of corruption and licence which he witnessed, have asserted that "his mind was strangely clouded by personal hatred "of Napoleon." *

At the same time, his political foresight was as remarkable as his candid judgment of his enemy. He declared, even while thus reporting the indifference of "the French nation to the claims of their exiled princes," that, "if he were one of that family, nothing should now "prevent him from coming forward on the field in "France; that if Great Britain were to stand by such a "prince, he would be sure to succeed; and that that "success would be still more certain a month or two "later, when Napoleon should commence to carry into "execution the oppressive measures which he would be "compelled to adopt in order to try to retrieve his "fortunes." It will be seen hereafter how accurately the event justified the prediction.

* See Napier, vi., 241.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Wellington defeats Soult on the Nive—Soult is repelled in two attacks on our position—Wellington encourages the Ministry to persevere in the war on the side of Spain—Napoleon restores Ferdinand to Spain—Wellington prepares for the next campaign—The Duc d'Angoulême arrives in the British camp.

BY the end of the first week in December the weather cleared up and permitted the resumption of active operations; and Wellington was already preparing to cross the Nive and drive the enemy to the northern side of the Adour when he received a letter from the Secretary of State, urging his advance upon political grounds; though the Ministry still neglected to facilitate the operations thus suggested, by providing him with money to pay to and maintain his army, and still allowed vessels loaded with supplies to be detained at Cadiz and Lisbon, for want of ships of war to protect their passage from the French privateers.

The Nive is a much larger river than the Nivelle, from which, at Amotz and St. Pé, it is only three or four miles distant. As it proceeds on its course it turns towards the north, and joins the Adour at Bayonne a few miles above the point at which that river falls into the sea. Bayonne had been fortified by the great Vauban, though, as his plans had not been completely carried out,

it is not a town of very great strength in respect of its own fortifications; but it is one of great importance from its position, and it was at this time protected from all assault on its southern side by the camp which Soult with great labour and skill had formed there on both banks of the Nive, and which he was now occupying with a very formidable force. His right wing, under Reille, was posted between the town and the sea, and was supported by a strong flotilla of gun-boats, and was covered in front by a morass and an extensive artificial inundation. Clausel commanded the left wing, which joined Reille's division a short distance from the sea, and extended as far as Villefranque on the Nive; while the right bank of the Nive, and the ground in front of that part of the camp which was between that river and the Adour, was held by D'Erlon with four strong divisions; their position being strengthened by the destruction of the bridges at Ustaritz and Cambo. It was altogether a most formidable position, but Wellington, who, according to his usual custom, had reconnoitred it in person, and also through his hunting excursions had acquired as thorough a knowledge of every part of the country as was possessed by the French themselves, did not doubt that he should be able to drive them from it, and on the morning of the 9th of December he put his troops in motion with that object. The position was far too strong to be attacked in front without the certainty of great loss to the assailants; but he conceived the idea, that, by passing the Nive and placing his own right wing on the Adour, he should cut the enemy off from their means of communication with the inland districts, and by so doing increase the distress for provisions which he was informed that they were already beginning to feel. And he expected that they would consequently either abandon their

camp, or reduce the force in it so much as to enable him to attack them with advantage. He was also influenced in some degree by the consideration that he should thus obtain a wider field for the employment of his cavalry, which now numbered nearly 9,000 men in a splendid state of efficiency, but which was at present reduced to a state of comparatively inactive uselessness by the narrowness of the space in which they were cooped up.

At daybreak on the 9th, the troops moved forth from their camp to execute his orders. As before, Hope commanded the left, Hill the right wing, and on this occasion the centre was entrusted to Beresford. Such an army, led by such chiefs under the presiding genius of Wellington, had but little reason to apprehend failure. Hope, who united the most daring courage with the most admirable skill, drove back the advanced posts of the enemy along the whole front of their entrenched camp between the Nive and the sea; and at the same time, Beresford, who had laid down a pontoon bridge at Ustaritz the day before, conducted some of the divisions of the centre across it, while Hill forded the river at Cambo; though the fords were so narrow and the water was so deep, except in their exact line, that some even of the cavalry were drowned in attempting the passage. The French resisted wherever resistance was practicable; and Soult, placing D'Erlon's division on a range of heights across the high road by which Hill was advancing, offered battle to that general. The roads were still so bad as materially to delay Hill's advance, but, when he arrived in front of the French, with a vigorous attack he drove them out of Villefranque and from the adjoining heights; and as it was late in the afternoon before this advantage was gained, he halted there for the night, while Beresford, having repaired the solid bridge at

Ustaritz, which the French had destroyed a week or two before, withdrew his force again to the left bank of the river.

Wellington had thus forced the passage of the Nive with comparatively trivial loss; but the fact of his army being now on each side of the river, so as to be divided by it, suggested to Soult the idea of bringing the whole or the bulk of his force against the British left wing, which he hoped that their comrades would be unable to support with sufficient rapidity to enable it to withstand his attack. And for such an operation his possession of Bayonne and of the camp in its front gave him great facilities, by enabling him to concentrate his force on either side of the Nive without being perceived. So confident did he feel of obtaining a great success that, in a despatch which he sent off to the Minister at War on the night of the 9th, he ventured to promise him better news the next day. Wellington too had been made somewhat overconfident by constant success, and, since he never anticipated such an attack as was now preparing, he had made no arrangements to meet it. He however never boasted of himself, but only of his troops, and a saying of his on a former occasion, that when he got into a scrape his troops got him out of it, was now about to be verified. The greater part of the left wing which, having had to march from St. Jean de Luz before it commenced its operations of the preceding day, had been exceedingly fatigued, had retired the night before to its cantonments; and the ridges of Barhouillet and Arcangues, which were the most advanced portions of the position, and were separated from each other by a narrow but deep valley, were only held by a brigade of Portuguese under General Campbell, and by the pickets of the light division, which at an early hour had received

orders to fall back to Arbonne, but which had fortunately been retained in its position by General Kempt, whose suspicions had been excited by some movements which he saw made by the advanced posts of the enemy.

The sun had not risen an hour when both ridges were assailed with great fury by the French in numbers vastly superior to the handful of the allied troops which occupied them: but both attacks completely failed. The picquets of the light division were indeed, as was inevitable, driven back on their main body; but neither the multitude of their assailants, nor the continued fire of heavy batteries which Soult brought against them, could make any impression on the collected division, or force them to give up a single inch of the village of Arcangues; and though the French, ashamed of being repelled by so scanty a force, continued the conflict the whole day, they were at last compelled to retire with heavy loss. The Portuguese at Barhouillet behaved with almost equal gallantry; making so valorous a resistance that the fifth division, the Guards, and Bradford's brigade of their own countrymen had time to come to their support. Wellington himself had remained during the preceding night on the right bank of the Nive, but the moment that he heard the cannonade, he crossed the river, gave directions for laying down a fresh bridge below Villefranque, and then hastened forward with the fourth division to the scene of action. Then the French desisted from the attack at that point also, having incurred in the double conflict a heavy loss in killed and wounded, and having also left behind 500 prisoners. We had on our side lost 300 prisoners; but our loss in killed and wounded was far less than that of the enemy; though among our wounded Sir John Hope himself had to be reckoned. He was a man of great

stature and strength, and, striving to compensate for the inferiority of his numbers by the greatness of his personal exertions, had exposed himself all day in the most daring manner; and had already received several bullets through his clothes before he was struck by a musket-ball in the ankle. His wound was painful, but he did not permit it to withdraw him from the field. Wellington became alarmed lest he should lose him, and sought to instigate his friends to give him a hint to moderate a rashness which was hardly justifiable in one whose life was so valuable, forbearing to mention it himself to Hope, as he said, because it was a "delicate subject;" but perhaps also because he felt a sort of consciousness that a rebuke for such conduct would not come well from one who was only too prone to the same indulgence of an excessive courage, his escape from the effects of which often appeared to the rest of the army little short of a miracle. But the diminution of the strength of the French this day was not confined to the loss which they sustained in the fight. The din of battle had ceased, and our troops were resting from the fatigues of the day around the bivouac fires, when some fresh battalions approached their quarters from the enemy's lines, but not in the guise or with the intention of enemies. They proved to be three German battalions, one belonging to Frankfort, and two to the principality of Nassau, which, having received from their rulers at home orders to abandon the French, had with joy, but not without considerable difficulty, obeyed the order, and now put themselves under our protection to be conveyed in British ships to their own country. Our troops were turned out to receive them with due honour, and Wellington gave a banquet to their principal officers, hoping that their example might perhaps be followed by

some of the other foreign regiments in Soult's army; and, when the news should reach Spain, in that of Suchet also.

The 11th and 12th did not pass off without some sharp skirmishes, in which the French entirely failed to deprive us of any of the advantages which we had gained in the two preceding days: but, on the night of the 12th, the rain again fell heavily, and swelled the Nive with a flood which carried away the bridge which formed the chief means of communication between Hill and the other divisions of the army; and consequently for a while nearly isolated that general, whose division did not exceed 14,000 men. Soult at once perceived the opportunity thus a second time afforded him of attacking a part of the army with advantage; and, leaving two divisions to protect his camp, he crossed with the rest to the right bank of the Nive, in order to fall upon the British general with nearly treble his numbers. His officers also were all in the highest spirits, boasting to one another, and to some British prisoners in Bayonne, that at last two of our divisions were caught in a trap, and that they and their general must be all brought into Bayonne before evening. They were doomed to experience the truth of the northern proverb, that it is not wise to sell the bear's skin before one has caught him. The British battalions were posted around the small village of St. Pierre, on the road from Bayonne to St. Jean Pied de Port, not two miles from the front of the French camp; but so able had been Hill's dispositions, and so gallantly was he seconded by his subordinate officers, that he repulsed the enemy at all points with heavy slaughter. Wellington had expected him to be attacked, and had made arrangements to support him with troops from his own side of the river. The broken bridge delayed their advance;

but that was repaired with great celerity; and soon after noon Wellington himself crossed it, hastening to his lieutenant's assistance with three divisions; but before they could take any share in the battle, the victory was won. The reinforcements thus brought up enabled the conqueror to change his tactics, and to assume the offensive with vigour: and as the French were endeavouring to rally their broken battalions, Wellington, who now took the command, ordered the whole line to advance, and pursued them to their camp. Two of their guns and many prisoners were taken; and their killed and wounded amounted to 3,000 men; a number more than doubling the loss sustained by Hill, who deservedly received the highest praises from his chief, as having thus won an important battle under the most formidable disadvantages.

The weather now became so bad as entirely to prevent all active operations on either side. And the two armies remained quiet in their cantonments, the British right wing being now firmly established at last on the Adour, and their head-quarters being fixed at St. Jean de Luz; while a set of telegraphs was erected at different parts of the lines, chiefly on the tops of the village churches, which could convey to Wellington almost instant information of any event affecting any part of them. Soult was well pleased with this period of forced inaction; as he desired time to discipline the new levies which had joined him, and to construct works to impede the further advance of the allies. And Wellington was almost equally contented with it, trusting that the position which he occupied on the Adour, menacing the navigation of that river, and thus materially affecting Soult's means of obtaining supplies, must eventually compel that marshal to abandon Bayonne; the retention of which on his part

was an object of primary importance, since, while he held it, the allies could not advance into the interior of France without sacrificing their communications with Spain and with the sea. In fact, Soult soon began to lessen the garrison in Bayonne, removing his own head-quarters to Peyrehorade on the Gave de Pau, (a rapid river which, after its junction with another called the Gave d'Oleron, which flows into it from the south, falls into the Adour about twenty miles above Bayonne,) and spreading his advanced posts along the banks of some small rivers between the Nive and the Gave d'Oleron.

Yet in spite of all the advantages already obtained from Wellington's recent operations, and of the yet greater results which might reasonably be anticipated, the British Government was still so far from appreciating their real importance that they, or at least the Secretary of State for War, Lord Bathurst, were again inclined to lead an ear to a silly and somewhat selfish proposition made to them by the Russian emperor, to transfer Wellington and his British troops to Holland, that they might there become the right wing of the vast combined army which was slowly preparing to cross the Rhine and to make its way towards Paris. It can hardly have failed to cause Wellington great annoyance to be thus forced a second time within four months to combat so ridiculous an idea; while, had he been in the least influenced by personal vanity, it would perhaps have been even more vexatious to find his past exertions and triumphs so undervalued as Lord Bathurst's letter to him on the subject appeared to imply that they were. Yet so perfect was his command of his temper that he proceeded to argue against it as calmly as if the proposal were in itself reasonable, and contained nothing the least vexatious or mortifying to himself. He even almost

apologized for giving an opinion at all on the question where the army should be employed, since it was one, he said, which it belonged to the Government to decide, while his business was only to obey their orders; but he then proceeded to give his reasons for objecting to the proposed removal to Holland in a manner so convincing that it may well have made the minister feel shame at having entertained the notion for a moment.

He said (the event has proved how truly he spoke) that the existing war was one "the result of which "might affect the world for ages," that, where he was, "he was further advanced on the French territory than "any of the allied powers, and better prepared than any "of them to take advantage of any opportunities which "might offer of annoying the enemy." In fact, he was at this moment the only invader of the French soil, though the allies in Germany were preparing also to cross the frontier, and did so on the last day of the year. He forbore to boast that he had at one time stood alone in his opinion that the Peninsula afforded the best theatre for resisting the progress of Napoleon's arms; but he reminded the Government that, "by having kept "in the field about 30,000 men in the Peninsula, they "had now for five years given employment to at least "200,000 of Napoleon's best troops, as it was ridiculous "to suppose that either the Spaniards or Portuguese "could have resisted for a moment if the British force "had been withdrawn:" he pointed out that "the "armies now employed against him could not be less "than 100,000 men, and that orders had been given for "the formation at Bordeaux of an army of reserve of "100,000 more." All of whom, if his army were removed to Holland, would probably be at once employed against Schwartzenberg, and that portion of them now

in the south "were such troops as the Russian and "German armies had not yet had to deal with."

The minister had asked how his operations on his present scene of action would induce Napoleon to make peace. He replied that "he was now in a commanding "situation on the most vulnerable, if not the only "vulnerable frontier of France. If he could bring 20,000 "Spaniards into the field, which he could do at once if "he had money and were properly supported by the "fleet, he could take Bayonne in a very short time. "If he could bring 40,000 Spaniards into the field he "could advance to the Garonne; in fact, he did not know "where he should stop. And could any man believe," he asked, "that Napoleon would not feel an army in such a "position more than he would feel it laying siege to "one of the fortresses in Holland?" He asserted that, "if it were only from the resource of men and money of "which the French emperor would be deprived, and the "reputation which he would lose by our being in that "position, it would do ten times more to procure peace "than ten armies on the side of Flanders." Moreover, "if it were true, as the ministers believed, that there "was a strong Bourbon party in France, and that it was "even the preponderating one in the south of France," it was plain that our army while operating in that district must do Napoleon the greatest possible mischief, so great indeed, "that he would grudge no sacrifice to get "rid of it." Finally, he endeavoured to impress on the Government that if they yielded to his arguments and allowed him to remain where he was, they must give up the idea of sending any force to Holland, "since the "British establishment was not equal to the maintenance "of two armies in the field at the same time." In fact, he expected the army which he actually had to be

reduced by the withdrawal of the German legion; so that he should not be able to begin the next campaign with such a force as that which he had brought from Portugal in the preceding year; while, as he complained for the last time, "every branch of the service was "stinted, and especially the naval branch, and those "supplies which necessarily came from England." His hopes of driving the French from Bayonne were damped by their undisturbed enjoyment of the navigation of the coast from Bordeaux; the army was overwhelmed with debt, "and he could scarcely stir out of his house on "account of the public creditors waiting to demand "payment of what was due to them."

There is no doubt that the British Government really found the greatest difficulty at this time in meeting all the immense demands which the progress of the war was making on their resources; and that much of the deficiency of which Wellington complained arose from causes beyond their control, and for which, therefore, it would be unjust to blame them. And the object of here making such frequent mention of those deficiencies has not been to throw an undue amount of blame on the ministers; but to set in a clearer light the genius of their General, to which full justice cannot possibly be done by any one who is ignorant of the manifold and unceasing hindrances of all kinds which he experienced from the day when he landed at Lisbon, to that on which, after a constant warfare of five years, he entered Toulouse in triumph, and received the submission of the last French marshals to the authority of their hereditary sovereign.

By the beginning of 1814, the French force in Bayonne was reduced so greatly that Wellington did not doubt that he could take their entrenched camp; but he did

1814.
not think it worth while to make the attempt, since, till the return of fine weather, it would be impossible for him to besiege the town. Soult had also received very considerable reinforcements, and in the first week of the new year he made an endeavour to drive back some of our advanced posts, and to establish his own in a more forward position: for a day one of the Portuguese divisions was compelled to fall back; but the success of the enemy was only temporary, as Wellington took advantage of the first fine day to drive them back from the ground of which they had obtained possession, and to re-establish his own posts. And Soult, finding that such operations on his part only exposed him to repulse and severe loss, abstained from any repetition of them.

The French marshal met also with another disappointment: Mina's Spanish regiments had committed great outrages in the district around Bidarray and Baygorry, on the left bank of the Nive; and the inhabitants, who had at all times been unfriendly to their Spanish neighbours, had begun to take up arms to defend and to revenge themselves. The whole population of the Basques was of a fierce and warlike disposition, and Soult had cherished a hope that General Harispe, who was a native of the province, would be able to rouse them all to united action, and thus to form an army which should operate upon Wellington's rear and communications with Spain with such effect as to compel him to detach a strong division against this new enemy; and thus, perhaps, to afford himself an opportunity of striking a blow against his diminished force. But the disposition of these rugged mountaineers, like that of the inhabitants of similar districts in general, was inclined rather to desultory outbreaks than to regular warfare. Wellington sought to check their hostility by a proclamation

addressed to them, in which he declared to them that they could not be allowed to assume the double character of soldiers and peaceable peasants alternately as each suited their convenience. They had a perfect right to enlist in the French armies, in which case they would, in the event of reverse, be entitled to fair treatment at his hands as legitimate enemies; they had also a right to remain peaceably in their homes, in which case he promised them the same protection which he had given to the inhabitants of every other district at any time occupied by his troops: but they must choose between these two lines of conduct, and adopt one to the exclusion of the other; since if they committed acts of hostility against him without enrolling themselves as soldiers, they gave him the right to look upon them as bandits, and to treat them as such outlaws are treated in all civilized countries.

It was so likely that he would be able to execute the menace thus implied that it was probably not without some effect; but the evident sincerity of his resolution to prevent every part of the army under his authority from pillaging them, and the regularity of his payments for all supplies which they brought to his camp, were more efficacious still with such a simple and needy people: they had never considered themselves as Frenchmen, and as they saw plainly which line of conduct tended most to their own interest, they remained quiet, resisting all the solicitations of Harispe to take up arms in a regular manner against the allies; and many of those who had quitted their homes in terror, returned to them, sometimes disguised in female attire to escape being included in the conscription which was being enforced in every part of France;* though a small body

* Batty's 'Campaign in the Western Pyrenees,' p. 78.

did not object to enlist in the French ranks, and were transferred to the banks of the Rhine to aid Napoleon in the desperate struggle which he was preparing to make against the fresh invaders of his dominions.

Though, however, the allies on the side of Germany formed the most numerous body of his enemies, the French emperor was well aware that the most important of his foes was Wellington's army. And he now paid a homage (which must have cost him a great struggle) to its past successes, and endeavoured at the same time to cut the ground from under its future operations, by making a treaty with Ferdinand of Spain, acknowledging him as king, and exacting from him in return a stipulation that he should abandon his British allies and remove their armies from his kingdom. Ferdinand, though willing to agree to any conditions whatever in order to recover his crown, yet doubting how far his subjects would acquiesce in the different provisions of the treaty which he was thus required to sign, made his acceptance of it conditional on its ratification by the Regency and the Cortes. And as, besides the article requiring the expulsion of the British troops from Spain, there were others also calculated to strike at the very root of the welfare and independence of the country, Wellington ably availed himself of the offensive character of those provisions, and took upon himself at once to write to his brother Henry, urging him to use all his influence with the Government in Spain to induce them to refuse their consent to such a treaty, by promising them the support of Great Britain and her allies in so patriotic a course. The Cortes and the Regency agreed in declining to ratify it; and though Napoleon, hoping to cause some division in their councils, nevertheless restored Ferdinand to his liberty and sent him back to his country, his

arrival there, which did not take place till the middle of March, was too late to produce any effect before the termination of the war.

In another way also, Napoleon endeavoured to make his accommodation with Ferdinand strengthen his own means of resistance to his enemies in the north, by directing Suchet to offer to withdraw his garrisons from the Spanish fortresses in Catalonia, and to retire with them into France, where they would have formed a valuable reinforcement to his own army. Yet so full of treachery was the French emperor, and so resolute to retain his hold on Spain, that he did not include Rosas or Figueras in the list of the fortresses to be evacuated, designing still to retain them in his hands, and with them the power of renewing his invasion of the country at a future period. The Spanish Government would have agreed to his proposal; but Wellington, who had expected some such offer for some time, sent the Spanish generals a peremptory order to make no capitulation with any French garrison, except on the condition of their surrendering as prisoners of war; since while locked up in their fortresses they could do very little harm; but if they should be united to Napoleon's army in the north, it was easy to see that such a reinforcement of veteran troops might have a most momentous influence on the next campaign.

Wellington was still kept inactive by the weather; but though by the middle of January he began to think that the probabilities of a general peace were greatly increased, he omitted no preparation that was in his power to make for the opening campaign at the earliest possible moment. And as his chief want was, and was likely to be, that of money, he had recourse to various expedients to supply it. As the whole country to the

south of the Adour, was now occupied by his army, he declared all the harbours in that district free ports, and ordered the levy of a moderate duty on everything which entered them, with the exception of some minor articles of food, and of supplies sent by sea for the use of his own army. He also endeavoured to procure some trifling sums, and the supply of certain necessaries for his army at a cheap rate, by granting licences to a limited number of French vessels to trade along the coast; but he subsequently abandoned that system, thinking its inconveniences greater than its advantages; and he soon found reason to be glad that he had done so, since the Ministry expressed their disapproval of the licences in unusually strong terms, and though they granted a temporary confirmation of those which he had already issued, most strictly prohibited any renewal of them. In order also to make the money which he might receive more available for circulation among the people in general, knowing that there were many men in his army who had enlisted to avoid the punishment of their crimes, he sought out those who were acquainted with the art of coining, and established a private mint, at which he recoined sufficient quantities of specie into napoleons, which were as willingly received by the purveyors as the more legitimate money of the country.

Yet, while he was thus preparing by every conceivable means for a vigorous commencement of the campaign, the authorities at home were weakening his force by the withdrawing from him his seasoned regiments, and replacing them with new ones. To him, a veteran was as much better than a recruit as Aladdin's old lamp was superior to the new one given in exchange for it by the magician; and he remonstrated as strongly as he could against such a measure; even exciting, as it would

seem, some slight displeasure in the Duke of York's breast, at the earnestness with which he pressed his own views, and dwelt upon the extent to which the adoption of such changes would for some time cripple his operations.

Every day strengthened his opinions that it would be desirable in the spring to put one of the Bourbon princes forward, if the military successes of the allies should not force Napoleon to make peace. And he still felt no confidence in anything which was taking place on the Rhine, where he thought that the generals were doing the exact reverse of what was best, not so much from a deficiency of military skill, as from a want of sufficient strength of mind to enable them "to resist the "cry of all the foolish people who, without knowing "what they were talking about, were perpetually writing "and talking about invading France." And he attributed their having been able to approach the Rhine at all to Napoleon's rashness, "in having placed himself "at Leipsic in a situation which every other officer would "have avoided." He was also strongly of opinion that Napoleon "had no intention to make peace, notwith-"standing his speeches and declarations." And in consequence of this belief, he was not displeased at a proposal of the Duc d'Angoulême to come to his camp, though he strongly advised that he should pass under the name of the Comte de Pradel till more accurate information had been obtained respecting the state of affairs of the district in general, and of the sentiments of the people.

As far back as the 20th of December, he had permitted the Comte de Grammont, who was serving in his army, to go to England as a kind of envoy from the Royalist party in France to the Bourbon family; en-

joining him at the same time to recommend the princes of that house to recollect "the chances that a successful "negotiation for a general peace might endanger the "safety of all their adherents in France;" and consequently, to proceed with the most extreme caution in deciding on the line which they should take. And it was probably in consequence of the report which the Comte de Grammont made that the resolution was taken of despatching the Duke to the British headquarters.

He did not at first make a very favourable impression on his champions. He was not endowed with a very majestic person, and his manners were in general rather overpolite than imposing; while on occasions of ceremony, he and his retinue indulged in such a variety of grimaces and contortions as afforded the greatest amusement to the younger part of the British staff, and at times even discomposed the sedate countenance of Wellington himself.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Wellington crosses the Adour—Defeats Soult at Orthes—Is wounded himself—Makes arrangement for the civil government of the district he occupies—He sends Beresford to Bordeaux—Wellington behaves with great political caution—Soult makes great efforts to check him.

AT last, by the second week in February, the weather began to clear and the snow to melt; and Wellington prepared to commence operations. He had himself reconnoitred the whole district, and the whole course of the Adour, often at great personal risk, on one occasion even approaching so near to Bayonne as to go within a few yards of a house full of French soldiers, not retiring till he thought he saw a French vessel making preparations to fire at his party.* And his examination of the town and of the river had led him to decide on crossing the latter below Bayonne. Probably no enterprise of the kind which he had ever attempted was so full of difficulty and danger; for the river is at least 500 yards wide, the tide, whether flowing or ebbing, runs with almost unexampled rapidity, the navigation is perplexed by various cross-currents, and is obstructed by numerous sand-banks; and, moreover, the French had a corvette and a strong squadron of gun-boats between

* Larpent, ii., 264.

the town and the mouth of the river. Wellington however, who, to use the expression of one at this time in constant communication with him,* "had banished the "words impossibility and difficulty from his vocabulary," trusted that the very greatness and peril of the attempt would contribute to its success, by throwing the French off their guard. And, as none of the methods ordinarily employed by engineers were available on this occasion, he himself devised a plan for the construction of a bridge of a size and strength sufficient for the conveyance of a division so numerous and so completely equipped with artillery and ammunition as to be by itself almost entitled to the name of an army. Instead of pontoons, he ordered forty vessels of from fifteen to thirty tons burden to be provided. These he intended to station with their broadsides to the bank at a point where piers, which had in former times been constructed on both sides of the river, in the hope by narrowing the stream to increase its rapidity sufficiently to enable it to wash away the sand-banks, reduced the channel to little more than half its natural width.

These vessels were heavily filled with ballast, and furnished with means of anchoring both at head and stern: from deck to deck stout cables were to be stretched, and planks were to be laid upon the cables, thus forming a bridge which should be capable of bearing any weight which could be placed upon it; while above these vessels a large boom was to be placed, composed of masts and heavy spars chained together, and secured by anchors, to prevent any fire-ships which might be sent down from the town from reaching the bridge. At the same time a squadron of gun-boats was procured from the fleet and stationed above the boom, to be ready to repel

* Larpent, ii., 291.

any attack which might be made on it by the armed vessels of the enemy.

Secrecy was as indispensable to his success as strength; accordingly, before he began to move his troops, he took the precaution to stop all communication between St. Jean de Luz and Bayonne; and on the 13th of February he began to put his right wing in motion, designing by its operations to divert Soult's attention from the movements of his left. He had not yet received the reinforcements which he expected from England, but some of the reductions of his army which he had apprehended had not taken place; and, hoping that they had now received a sufficient lesson, he had recalled some of the Spanish divisions, repeating his injunctions to their generals to preserve the strictest possible discipline; so that he now took the field with 70,000 British and Portuguese troops, of which 10,000 were superb cavalry, and with 30,000 Spaniards; while his artillery amounted to 100 guns. The numbers of the force with which Soult prepared to encounter him are not exactly known, but are believed to have been slightly inferior to those of the allies; though that inferiority was counterbalanced by the possession of Bayonne and other fortresses which required far fewer men to garrison than to blockade them.

On the 14th, Hill, with 20,000 men and 16 guns, marched against the French posts between the Nive and the Gave d'Oleron, and drove them back without difficulty, thus cutting off the communication between Bayonne and St. Jean Pied de Port, and enabling a Spanish division to commence the blockade of that fortress. The next day the French made a stouter resistance: 4,000 of them were drawn up in a strong position on a mountain called Garris, under Harispe, an

officer of great skill, courage, and influence over his men. But such firm confidence was now reciprocally established between Wellington and his troops, that he did not fear sending only two regiments, the 28th and 39th, to dislodge them, supporting them indeed at the same time with a brigade of Portuguese directed against another part of the hill. He gave their general, Pringle, no detailed orders, but simply desired him "to take the "hill before dark." And those few words, showing how completely absent from his mind was any idea of the possibility of failure, inspired the men more than the most elaborate harangue. They dashed up the hill with loud shouts, and though Pringle was wounded, and most of their principal officers were dismounted, and though the French fought with unusual energy, venturing even to cross bayonets with them in a stubborn charge, they "took the hill before dark," and 200 prisoners also; and Harispe retired towards the Gave d'Oleron, breaking down as he passed the bridges over the smaller streams, to retard as much as lay in his power the advance of the victorious allies.

As the forward movement was pressed with great vigour, by the 18th the French were driven back beyond the Gave d'Oleron and our posts were advanced to that river, of which they were prepared to force the passage as soon as the pontoon train could be brought up from the rear. Wellington had the satisfaction of seeing that the Spaniards behaved exceedingly well, and gave them liberal praise, in the hope of encouraging them to deserve the name of soldiers in every respect. And the whole army was naturally greatly inspirited at this successful opening of the campaign. Besides being beaten from many strong positions, the enemy had suffered a very considerable loss in killed and wounded: while on our

side fewer than 200 men had fallen in the four days, a number smaller than that of the prisoners which we took in a single combat.

Wellington's own exertions at this time were unusually great and unremitting. Till the 18th he had been with Hill's division, exercising in fact the command, though he gave his lieutenant the credit of the success; and the moment that he saw him established in strength and able to command the passage of the Gave d'Oleron, he hastened to the left wing, in hopes to be able at once to superintend the passage of the Adour; but he found the weather too bad, and the river too much swollen to admit of the attempt being made, and in consequence leaving it to Hope's judgment to cross as soon as the weather would permit, he returned with speed to the right to take the management of the operations of that division which were likely to be less delayed.

He increased the force in that quarter by bringing up some divisions from the centre, and was thus able to detach parties in different directions, so as to keep Soult for some time in doubt as to his real object, which that marshal rather conceived to be an attack upon the camp at Bayonne. There were many fords on the river, though the stream was so rapid that none of them were very easy; and Wellington, by showing strong bodies at some of them of which he did not propose to avail himself, crossed it on the 24th almost without opposition at the two points which he had selected, and pushed forward to the Gave de Pau, on the further side of which lay the village of Orthes, where Soult proceeded to concentrate his troops in the hope of checking his further advance.

In the meanwhile, Hope, by a union of skill, audacity, and resolution worthy of his chief, had established his division on the right bank of the Adour. The difficul-

ties of the enterprise which had been foreseen were greatly augmented by the weather; for the boats of which the bridge was to be constructed, were prevented by foul winds from entering the mouth of the river at the time when they were expected; and in consequence, Hope arriving first at the left bank on the morning of the 23rd of February, was exposed to a heavy fire from the French gun-boats and from the corvette. He replied however with great effect, especially with rockets, which on this occasion were used for the first time in our army, and which caused such consternation that the French at last absolutely refused to face them, and retreated in great disorder. Their ceaseless fire burnt some of the gun-boats, and drove the rest away; and then Hope, making a raft with some of his pontoons, sent a few companies across the river, as Wellington had formerly sent his scanty boatloads across the Douro. From a fortunate misapprehension of his force, General Thouvenot, the governor of Bayonne, made only a very feeble attack upon the troops which crossed first, and no attempt whatever to resist the landing of the regiments which followed in rapid succession. The passage was continued during the whole night, so that by midday on the 24th several thousand men were established on the right bank of the river. By that time the wind had changed, blowing very freshly up the Adour, and the British gun-boats and the vessels destined to compose the bridge began to enter the river; but the tide was running out with great violence; the surf was heavy, the sand-banks constantly shifting made the navigation at all times intricate and difficult, and many of the ship's boats were upset, and many brave men were drowned. At last, however, British skill and perseverance succeeded, the vessels reached their destination, were moored firmly

in their appointed order, and by the evening of the 26th the bridge was completed. Hope the next day conveyed his artillery and stores across the river, and completed the investment of Bayonne, which he had commenced on the 25th, driving the enemy with considerable loss from the village of St. Etienne, on the great road to Bordeaux, and carrying his advanced posts to within a very short distance of the outworks of the town.

On the same day Wellington himself dealt the enemy a still heavier blow. As usual, he had carefully examined their position in every part, and having decided that it was impossible to force his way over the bridge at Orthes, the centre of which they had blocked up, he resolved to cross the river lower down, and then to march up the stream to the attack which he proposed to make. Soult had destroyed all the bridges over the Gave de Pau except that at Orthes: from that bridge a range of hills of moderate height, but steep and rugged in most parts, and covered by a swampy marsh along a portion of its front, ran in a semi-circular sweep and a north-westerly direction, and was occupied by the French army, the left of which rested on the river, the right occupying the mountain-village of St. Boes, and the centre being, from the form of the chain of hills, drawn back from the first assault. The two armies were not very unequal in numbers. Wellington had 33,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry (but the nature of the ground rendered this arm on either side almost useless), and 48 guns. Soult had 3,000 cavalry, 38,000 infantry, and 40 guns; so that his superiority in infantry was in some degree counterbalanced by his inferiority in horse and in artillery. But his position was of exceeding strength, and one which in itself was equal to a force of many thousand men.

BATTLE
OF
ORTHES.
Bidalle
A
B
Baigts
C
D
Cason
Anglade
Castetarbe
ORTHES
GAVE DE PAU
Sallespisse
Motte de Turenne
E
A Vivian
B Beresford
C Cotton
D Picton
E Hill

On the 26th, Beresford moved several miles down the stream to Peyrehorade, where he threw a pontoon-bridge over the river, and by that and two deep fords conducted two divisions in safety to the right bank: and Wellington, as soon as he heard of his success, sent Picton with another division and a brigade of cavalry across at a point between Peyrehorade and Orthes. He had some expectation that the appearance of this force on the right bank of the Gave would alone be sufficient to cause the French marshal to retreat; and, indeed, in the evening a report was brought to him that such a movement had been commenced. But the return of daylight undeceived him, showing him the whole of the enemy's army awaiting his attack. It was not long delayed. Hill, with 12,000 men, was left in front of the bridge at Orthes, with orders to pass the river above that point, and turn the enemy's left wing when the action should have made sufficient progress in other quarters: and the rest of the army crossed two or three miles below at an early hour, and advanced in rapid order against the hostile lines. The first attacks were made on St. Boes by Beresford, and on the left of the hostile centre by Picton: no more intrepid leaders ever headed more dauntless followers; but the French too were worthy of such foes; —Taupin was opposed to Beresford; Foy and D'Armagnac to Picton—and a terrible struggle ensued. Beresford carried St. Boes, but being unable to gain the open ground beyond that village, obtained no real benefit from his success; while Picton was unable to gain any advantage at all, and was more than once repelled with loss. At last, when the conflict had lasted three hours, the Portuguese quailed under the storm of fire which was poured upon them, and fell back in disorder, causing some confusion among the firmer ranks of their allies.

Soult thought that at length the hour had come when he was to avenge himself for the many defeats he had sustained at the hands of his antagonist. In his exultation he smote his thigh with his right hand, and exclaimed, "At last I have him." But he had to deal with one unmatched for calmness and quickness of decision at critical moments, and whose fertility of resource ever seemed to increase as difficulties thickened around him. In a moment, as it were by inspiration, Wellington changed the whole plan of his battle. He brought up a fresh division to support the troops engaged around St. Boes, while at the same time he sent the 52nd regiment across the marsh in front of the enemy's centre, with orders to ascend the hill and assail the flank and rear of the division with which Beresford was still struggling; and he hurled two more brigades against the left flank of General Foy's division, flushed with an advantage which it had just gained over one of Picton's detached columns. There was a very slight space between Foy and Taupin, and into that space (while the two generals were making head with difficulty against the fresh troops so unexpectedly brought against them) Colborne now thrust the 52nd, spreading dismay and confusion on both sides of him. Foy was severely wounded; one of Taupin's subordinate generals fell dead; the troops at St. Boes fell back, and Wellington in a moment sent two of the divisions fighting there through the village, now gaining the open ground behind for which he had so long been struggling in vain. The victory was won, and Soult began to retreat; but the position which he had chosen was very unfavourable for that operation. The British army had attacked him from the south-east, and were masters of the whole country in that direction. He had therefore only a choice of two roads, one leading to

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Pau, up the right bank of the Gave of that name; the other pointing northwards to the Adour, across several narrow but deep and rapid streams, the nearest of which, the Luy de Bearn, was only passable by a small bridge at a village called Sault de Navailles. He soon learnt that this was in fact the only line open to him; for, when Wellington changed his plan, he also sent Hill orders to cross the river instantly and to fall upon the enemy's left wing: and that general speedily found a ford at Souars, a short distance above Orthes bridge, crossed it with his whole division, drove from the heights behind it a detachment which Soult had placed to guard it, cut off the retreating French from the road to Pau, and hastened onwards with great speed in hopes to cut them off also from Sault de Navailles.

But however he might be out-generalled, Soult's courage was indomitable: he still showed a bold front to the conquerors who pressed upon his traces; and, fortunately for him, Wellington at the most critical moment was hit in the groin by a musket-ball, which happily was in some degree spent, but which retained force enough to strike him from his horse in a state of such complete insensibility that General Alava, who was by his side, thought that he was killed. In a few minutes, however, he recovered sufficiently to pass a jest on his wound,* which nevertheless produced so severe and painful a contusion as to render him for some hours incapable of riding sufficiently forward to superintend the pursuit;

* A minute or two before, he and General Alava had met a Portuguese soldier returning from the front, who gave as his excuse that he was "offendido," slightly hurt. The Duke, to whom the expression was new, was laughing at it when he fell; and when he recovered, and saw his Spanish friend standing over him in a state of evident anxiety and alarm, he reassured him, saying, "only offendido."—Anecdote communicated to me by the present Duke.

and indeed materially to cripple his movements for many days.

As the retreat proceeded, the field showed a most unusual appearance; for Hill's division and the French army were marching by almost parallel roads towards Sault de Navailles, and, as each saw the vital importance of being the first to reach it, they at last began to run, and the two sides seemed engaged, not in a combat, but in a race. On the direct line of the French retreat Cotton pressed vigorously forward with his cavalry, making many prisoners; but, owing to the confusion consequent on Wellington's absence from the front, large bodies of them escaped after they had thrown down their arms and surrendered; and, as the subordinate French generals displayed great skill and resolution, they kept off their pursuers till they reached the Luy de Bearn, and obtained possession of the bridge, across which no attempt could be made to pursue them further.

It had been a great victory. Our killed and wounded somewhat exceeded 2,000 men; but the loss of the French doubled ours, and in addition to that which they sustained on the field, several thousand of the new levies threw away their arms and deserted their standards in dismay. Six guns too were taken, and, as Wellington advanced, immense magazines, which Soult had collected in the full confidence that he should be able to hold his ground, fell into our hands. What was of even greater importance, Soult was now driven completely behind the Adour, and could no longer hope that any advantage of position would enable him to hold his ground against the superior skill and ever-ready tactics of his antagonist.

Wellington's successes had now established his position so securely that he had no longer any fear of being driven

back into Spain; but they had not diminished his cares, but had rather multiplied them, and, indeed, had created him fresh causes of anxiety. As a matter of necessity he took upon himself the general superintendence of the civil government of the districts of which he had military occupation, requiring the mayors and other authorities of the different municipalities to continue to discharge the functions of their respective offices (recollecting that while doing so they must abstain from all communication with Soult's army and with the civil authorities of the French government), or else to quit their towns and place themselves under the protection of their own generals. It was evident that obedience to his demand would not justly compromise them with their own Government in the event of peace being concluded with Napoleon; at the same time that it insured the tranquillity of their several districts, for which Wellington made them responsible; and for the further security of which he required the inhabitants themselves to form a guard for the preservation of public order, and for the protection of their property. He also took upon himself to order levies of taxes for the current expenses of the municipal governments thus continued, and to regulate the disbursement of the sums which had been previously collected. And in the arrangement of the affairs of this kind thus brought under his cognizance, he showed the same administrative capacity which had distinguished him at Seringapatam, the same paternal desire for the welfare of the inhabitants whose protector he had thus become, and a liberal anxiety to encourage their commerce by establishing as extended a freedom of trade as was compatible with existing circumstances. He met with very little resistance; scarcely any magistrate objected to continue in office, and, where such an event did

happen, he convened the principal inhabitants of the place or district, and, telling them that an established government was an object of much greater importance to them than to himself, requested them to elect a successor to the recusant officer. He had far more difficulty in repressing the excessive precipitation of some of those who complied with his injunctions, but who, influenced in some instances by an honest zeal for the family of their ancient sovereign, in others probably by a wish to promote their own interests, by appearing to have been the first to espouse a cause the eventual success of which they fancied they foresaw, could hardly be prevented from making ostentatious and premature declarations of their disaffection to the government of Napoleon, and of their eagerness for the restoration of the old dynasty. Wellington concealed from no one that his opinions as to what was best for the permanent interests of France and of Europe coincided with those expressed. Indeed, he now wrote to the ministers at home, strongly advising that the allies should declare themselves favourable to the restoration of the Bourbons, pronouncing his own conviction that "any such declaration would raise such a "flame in the country as would soon spread from one "end of it to the other, and would infallibly overturn "Napoleon;" and averring that "he could not discover "the policy of not hitting one's enemy as hard as one "can and in the most vulnerable place." No doubt too he also foresaw that the time was approaching when such a declaration would be made. Still, till it should be made, he saw the necessity of caution, which indeed might be more easily practised when it seemed probable that such necessity would be but short lived, and he warned all people that the object of the allies had been avowed to be, not the dethronement of Napoleon, but the

establishment of peace; that their ministers were at that moment negotiating with those of the French emperor in the hope of concluding peace, and that, should a treaty be made, it would be wholly out of his power to protect them in the very slightest degree from the resentment of their government which they would have provoked by their imprudence.

Bordeaux was well known to be the city in which of all others the Bourbon party was strongest; and, as Soult's retreat into the interior had left the road to that city open, at the end of the first week in March, Wellington sent Beresford thither with 12,000 men, giving him the most precise instructions to maintain a strict neutrality. He did not object to his avowing "that the British nation and their allies wished well to "Louis XVIII.," and that "he should not interfere to "prevent the partisans of that prince from doing what- "ever they deemed most for their interest;" but at the same time he ordered him to repeat his warning that "the allies were negotiating a treaty of peace with "Napoleon;" and to beg the inhabitants to "weigh this "matter well before they raised a standard against his "government and involved themselves in hostilities. "If, notwithstanding this warning, they should think "proper to hoist the white standard" (the ensign of the Bourbons) "and to proclaim Louis XVIII.," Beresford was "not to oppose them;" but, on the other hand, if the magistrates should try to obtain orders from him to proclaim Louis, he was to refuse to give them.

Beresford reached Bordeaux on the 12th of March, where he was received with the greatest enthusiasm by the citizens. The mayor and civil authorities met him with an address, declaring that his arrival was "the

"epoch of their deliverance from slavery," after reading which, the mayor publicly tore off his tri-coloured scarf, and assumed a white one in its place; and his example was followed by the generality of the inhabitants. But he was not content with this demonstration: Beresford himself was inclined somewhat to overstep the exact letter of his instructions, and made it known that he was desirous* to afford them every assistance; and, presuming probably in some degree on the encouragement thus given him, the mayor on the same day published a proclamation to the citizens, telling them that† "the "English, Spanish, and Portuguese armies had united, "as the nations in the north of Europe had likewise "done, to destroy the scourge of nations, and to replace "him by a monarch who would be the father of his "people. That it was only by restoring him that they "could appease the resentment of a neighbouring nation, "which the most treacherous despotism had made them "attack." And promised them that "the presence of "the Bourbons, conducted among them as they were by "their generous allies, would bring them the end of all "their evils."

Wellington was both annoyed and indignant at this language, which, in his eyes, "compromised him with "the governments whose servant he was, putting a lie "in his mouth, and which also committed many of the "provinces through which his army had passed," and he at once addressed a letter on the subject to the Duc d'Angoulême, who had entered Bordeaux, and had assumed the authority of governor of that city in the name of the king. He set plainly before the prince the

* See his despatch to Wellington—Dispatches, xi., 577, and compare Wellington's instructions to him, ib., 588.

† See the mayor's proclamation in the Dispatches, xi., 579.

impossibility, consistently with his duty, of his taking any part whatever in compelling any one to submit to the authority of his Royal Highness, and pointed out that the statements contained in the mayor's proclamation as to the objects of the allied armies were notoriously false, as was the statement that they had conducted the duke himself to Bordeaux. With a deference which one may suspect to have been a little ironical, he avowed his confidence "that his Royal Highness had not "authorized this proclamation, since the intentions "imputed to himself in it were contrary to the language "which he had invariably held to his Royal Highness on "the subject." He expressed a hope that the sovereigns whose armies he was commanding would feel sure that nothing which he himself had ever done or said had justified the mayor in issuing such a document. But he gave the prince clearly to understand that the fact of its issue would compel him to act with even increased caution. "Since" (and the resolution which he here expressed was above all others that which guided his conduct in every action of his life) "he desired to keep "clear of a course which was not guided by the exact "truth."

The Duc d'Angoulême was less scrupulous, and evidently thinking that the mayor's proclamation was calculated to do service to his cause, was inclined to justify it; but Wellington adhered to his opinion, not only that the proclamation was impolitic, as likely to produce bad effects on the negotiations for peace, and to lead the inhabitants of the adjacent districts (who as yet were far from being either unanimous or ardent in the cause of the Bourbons) to compromise themselves; from believing that they could rely upon his protection; but also that it was

calculated to throw doubt upon his personal honour, by making it appear that he privately sanctioned measures against which he had publicly protested. With the frankness which belonged to his character as well as to his profession, he expressed his regret at finding that the prince was inclined to take "the same erroneous "view." of the state of affairs as the mayor. The mayor, he declared, had not treated him "with common fair-"ness, or with truth." And after enumerating proofs that the proclamation had already created a false impression of the real state of affairs throughout the district, he gave the prince formal notice that if he did not, within ten days, adopt some means of disavowing those parts of it of which he complained, "he should publicly "repudiate them himself."

The mayor's conduct had, in Wellington's opinion, been really caused by the secret fears which mingled with his party zeal, and which led him to pretend a reliance on the protection of the British General, which he hoped might perhaps induce Wellington to throw it over him in the event of his hopes being baffled by a peace. But the progress of events prevented any practical mischief from being caused by it; and Wellington was satisfied with the opportunity which the addresses presented to him at Toulouse a few weeks later afforded him of declaring publicly the line of conduct which he had invariably enjoined upon others and had himself adopted.

The day after the battle of Orthes, Soult crossed the Adour at St. Sever, and directed his retreat up that river, while Wellington followed him with his whole army, though he was unable to press him as closely as he wished owing to the state of the smaller streams, which

became suddenly flooded so as to delay the transport of his supplies. Once or twice the French marshal halted, and showed an inclination again to try the event of a battle; but Hill beat Harispe's division in a smart combat at Aire, taking considerable magazines and many prisoners, and then Soult continued his retreat in a south-westerly direction toward Tarbes, calling in his detachments and reorganizing his army with great energy, while at the same time he tried to restore the confidence of his soldiers and stimulate the inhabitants of the district to exertion by a fiery address, not ill-calculated for the end which he had in view, but showing that his estimate of the value of truth more nearly resembled that on which his sovereign was wont to act than that which the adversary whom he reproached was about the same time expressing to the Bourbon prince. He ventured to claim the day of Orthes "as an advantage" gained by his own troops. He reproached Wellington for endeavours, which he imputed to him, "to excite the French "soldiers and their countrymen to revolt and sedition," and "to stir up a civil war," though at the same time he expressed his confidence that the knowledge of the British General's objects had increased a hundredfold his own power of defeating them. Adopting the constant language of his imperial master, he inveighed against the English "as a disloyal and perfidious nation," the constant patroness "of all conspiracies, detestable "plots, treacheries, and political assassinations" which could satisfy "her measureless ambition and insatiable "rapacity." And he warned the inhabitants that even the regularity of their present payments and their affected generosity were only pretences to cloak their designs till they should be able to levy enormous con-

tributions; and having excited civil war, and "destroyed "France by the arms of its own children, to enslave it "as they already had enslaved Spain, and Portugal, and "Sicily, and every other nation which groaned under "their dominion."

The invectives against himself and his country the victorious general could afford to disregard, and in forwarding a copy of Soult's address to the ministers at home, dismissed it with the remark that it was not of a very pacific tenor.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Wellington calls in his detachments—He pursues Soult, and reaches the Garonne—He prepares to attack Toulouse—The battle of Toulouse—Louis XVIII. is acknowledged in Toulouse—News of Napoleon's abdication arrives—Wellington is appointed ambassador to Paris—Goes to Spain.

THE stormy weather, and the consequently bad state of the roads and rivers, prevented him from continuing his operations against Soult as he desired till the middle of March; and as from some incorrect reports he believed that that marshal had already been reinforced by a strong division of Suchet's Catalonian army, he doubted whether he himself were strong enough to act offensively against him till Beresford should return, to whom, as soon as he received his report of the friendly disposition of the citizens of Bordeaux, he sent orders to rejoin him with the greater part of his division. And at the same time, as he supposed Suchet to be moving with his whole army to combine with Soult, he transmitted directions to General W. Clinton, who then commanded the British force in that province, to bring the greater part of it to join him. At the same time that he sent Beresford to Bordeaux he had despatched General Fane with another division to take possession of Pau; and the departure of these detachments reduced his numbers below those of

Soult; but on the 13th he was strengthened by the arrival of a strong Spanish division under Freyre, and a day or two later by the return of Beresford, and as the rivers had fallen again, he prepared to advance.

He was forced to proceed with as much caution as ever, for he justly distrusted the success of the allied armies which were advancing from the Rhine, but whose chiefs, the Emperor Alexander and Prince Schwartzenberg, were so evidently unequal to cope with the genius of Napoleon, that it seemed doubtful whether even their vast superiority of numbers would enable them to avoid some fatal disaster. And at home, not only was the ancient spirit of distrust in his eventual success but little diminished, but so little did the Government even yet appreciate the importance of his operations, and their paramount influence on the course of affairs, that with a persevering incapacity for the comprehension of military plans which has hardly a parallel in the history of ministerial mismanagement, instead of sending him every soldier that could possibly be spared, and thus giving him a force strong enough, when guided by his genius, to bear down all opposition, they sent to Holland a fine division under Sir Thomas Graham, who had recovered from the illness which had compelled him to resign his command in Spain; and left Wellington so weak that he was compelled to represent to Lord Bathurst how inferior his army was to the duties expected of it. In fact, the whole force under his own command available for operations against Soult did not exceed 45,000 men.

On the 13th, Soult, having perhaps received information of his weakness, or suspecting it from his caution, resumed the offensive, and marched forward again to attack Hill's division, which was still on the southern bank of the Adour; but he was easily driven back, and

again retreated towards Tarbes, in which direction Wellington also marched as soon as he had been joined by his outlying detachments. His progress was irresistible; it was in vain that the enemy endeavoured to check it at Lambege, at Vic Bigorre, and at Tarbes: under Wellington's personal direction, Hill drove them from one position, Picton from another, Sir Henry Clinton turned them at a third, and after sustaining heavy loss Soult continued his retreat without halting to Toulouse, while Wellington pursued him with his army divided into three columns, advancing steadily but cautiously through an unknown country, moving by the shortest road upon the city with his centre, while his right wing under Hill reached the Garonne and marched up the left bank of that river. As the army advanced, it was received with great cordiality by the generality of the people of the district, many of whom were inclined from principle to favour the Bourbons, while still more were conciliated by the discipline of the troops, the regular payments of the commissaries, and not a few of those who came in contact with him by the unpretending frankness of the great Captain himself. At one village, the schoolmaster, though a Roman Catholic and a priest, brought to head-quarters a long poem, entitled "My Dream," containing a prediction of many of the recent events, inspired probably as much by hope as by sagacity, and many praises of Wellington, which he spouted out with great delight to the staff, who admired his sentiments and praised his poetry.* While the mayor of another village,† after having enjoyed a long conversation with him without the least suspicion of the rank of his companion, was astonished beyond all measure at receiving an invitation to dine with him, and could

* Larpent, iii., 91. † Ib., 76.

not help contrasting the conduct of the invading general with that of his own countrymen; since the Generals Clausel and Harispe had occupied his house the day before, had ordered a dinner at his expense, and had not even asked him to share it.

Wellington was now more indefatigable than ever, spending the whole day in riding over the country to examine it; carrying his resolution to judge of everything with his own eyes so far, that on one occasion, when close to the enemy's outposts, he put an oilskin cover to his cocked hat, and entered into conversation with the French vidette, during which he took a careful survey of all that he wished to see.*

On the 27th, after marching for some days along roads so choked up with mud and snow that the officers compared the firmest and clearest parts of them to the worst roads in England after a thaw, that the French themselves had pronounced them absolutely impassable for artillery, and that when a carriage belonging to Wellington got fixed in the mud, it required fourteen oxen and mules to drag it out, the whole allied army reached the Garonne nearly opposite to Toulouse, and began at once to endeavour to throw a bridge across that river; but it was presently found that, owing partly to some mistake made by Wellington himself, the pontoons were too few to span the stream, and it became necessary to recall the troops which had been already ferried across, to the great disappointment of the army, and to the injury of some of the succeeding operations. Even at this distance from the sea, the Garonne is a wide and deep river, and behind it lay the rich and populous city of Toulouse, of great importance as the chief military arsenal of the south of

* Larpent, iii., 121.

France, strong in natural and artificial defences, being covered on the western side by the river, on the north and east by the great canal of Languedoc, which joins the Garonne just below the town, and by a ridge of steep hills called Mont Rave, on the further side of the canal, which was occupied by some solid and heavily armed redoubts. Behind the Mont Rave, and parallel to that and to the canal, ran another river, called the Ers, small, but flowing through soft and marshy ground; while another hill rose a short distance from the town on the southern side, a little beyond the suburb of St. Michael. The main town was also entirely surrounded by a wall studded with towers, and armed with dense batteries of heavy guns; and a suburb on the other side of the Garonne, known as St. Cyprien, was protected in its landward side by a similar defence.

The first attempt to bridge the Garonne had been made at a point above the town, partly because the river was narrower there, and partly because such an operation was calculated to check the approach of any reinforcements from Suchet's army, should such be in their way, (and it was well known that Soult had urgently requested them). Three days afterwards, Hill with 1,300 men did effect a passage a little higher up the stream, with the intention of also crossing the river Arriége, and marching against the city on its southern and weakest side, while Wellington with the main army should attack St. Cyprien. But the banks of the Arriége were at all times marshy, and the roads on both sides of it were now so entirely broken up by the rain as to render all military operations in that quarter impracticable. So Hill was recalled across the Garonne, and Wellington changed his plans, resolving to cross the river below Toulouse, and to attack the enemy by an advance against the northern and

eastern sides of his position. He had never assailed one more formidable. For a day or two before he reached the Garonne, and for several days afterwards, the weather was unusually stormy, and the almost incessant rain, and the melting of the snow on the mountains at the head of the river, had flooded it to such a degree that it was not till the 8th of April that he was able to renew his attempts to cross it; and the French with even more than their usual energy and skill had availed themselves of the respite thus afforded them to strengthen their defences in every possible manner. Most of the bridges over the Ers they had broken down; all those over the canal they had protected with strongly armed bridge-heads; while, under the untiring labour of more than half the army, redoubts and entrenchments rose along the steep heights of the Mont de Rave, and seemed to render its naturally rugged front impregnable when occupied by even less hardy soldiers than the veterans of Soult, whose resolution and resources seemed increased by the recollection that it was the chief city of his own native district, the safety of which now depended on his prowess.

Before the period for action returned, news of great importance reached both the hostile camps. Wellington learnt that Ferdinand had reached Spain in safety, and that his brother, the Infante Don Carlos, whom Suchet had at first threatened to detain as a hostage for the safety of the French garrisons, had joined him, and was with him in safety at Gerona. And Soult received intelligence that the Russian and German armies had entered Paris; though he had no certain information either of the position or of the condition of Napoleon. Rumours of this great event also reached the British head-quarters; but Wellington put no faith in them, remarking

that there were now more false reports spread about in France than had ever been circulated in Spain; and that "between the Government and those who detested the "Government, there was no truth" in the whole country. And he continued his operations without reference to them, while the fact of the capture of Paris made Soult only the more anxious to preserve Toulouse.

As early as the 4th of April, Wellington had detached Beresford with his left wing to Grenade, a place fifteen miles below Toulouse, and a mile or two above the point at which the Ers falls into the Garonne, where that marshal had thrown a pontoon bridge across the river, and established three divisions on its right bank; but before the remainder of his force, among which was the light division, could cross the river, it rose again, carried away one of the pontoons, and stopped all communication between Beresford and the main body of the army. Wellington at once repaired to Grenade, crossing the river each day in a boat at dawn, in order to be prepared for the event of Soult falling with his whole army upon the troops thus isolated from their comrades, and returning each night to his head-quarters when the danger had passed away. Soult, however, judged it better to make no such movement, lest during his absence the main body of the allies should storm St. Cyprien, and force their way over the bridge which connected that suburb with the city; and occupied himself still in giving additional strength to the works on his intended field of battle.

At last, by the 8th of April, the floods had subsided sufficiently; one bridge was laid down a few miles above Grenade, and Beresford's bridge was removed to a point higher up still, and across them the whole army with the exception of Hill's division passed over to the right bank of the Garonne in the course of the 8th and 9th,

and Wellington gave orders to attack the enemy the next morning. Had it not been for some unexpected slowness in the removal of Beresford's bridge, he would have fought them a day earlier; and he was greatly displeased with the engineers to whose blunders he attributed the delay.

The Mont Rave, which had been chosen by Soult as his field of battle, was about two miles long; broken into two divisions by a slight gap, through which a road led from Lavaur to the city; the eastern ridge was named Calvinet, and the western St. Sypière: behind St. Sypière and the western point of Calvinet rose a second bridge, also cloven by the Lavaur road, named Cambon on the west, and Sacarin on the east, and also fortified with strong redoubts armed with heavy batteries; and the eastern extremity of Calvinet was crossed by a smaller hill, called Pugade, which was occupied by a brigade of chosen troops under General St. Pol, but which was not fortified or entrenched, an omission for which some of the French military critics have severely blamed their commanders. Had not the 18th Hussars on the evening of the 8th obtained possession of a bridge over the Ers, a little beyond Calvinet, that river would have formed a defence to the whole front of the French position, which would have rendered it almost impregnable; but, as it was, the allied army moved on between the river and the hill, though its advance was still both difficult and dangerous, since, as St. Sypière was our destined object of the attack, it was necessary to make a flank march with Beresford's division along the front of Calvinet; and Wellington's own victory at Salamanca had given ample proof of the extreme peril of such a movement in the front of a skilful and ready antagonist.

In addition to the enormous strength of his position, Soult had also the advantage in point of numbers. The entire allied army consisted indeed of 50,500 men, but of these, Hill's division, amounting to something over 13,000 men with 18 guns, was on the left bank of the Garonne, and took no part in the battle, so that the force employed in the attack amounted to no more than 25,000 British and Portuguese troops, and 12,000 Spaniards, with 46 guns; while the French battalions numbered 38,000 men, and they had also 80 guns, many of them being of a far heavier calibre than Wellington's, which were all field-pieces.

At six in the morning the allies began to advance; Beresford leading the 4th and 6th divisions and a brigade of cavalry along the left bank of the Ers, towards the further end of the enemy's position; while Vivian, with a brigade of hussars, moved along the right bank of the same river, driving in the French cavalry in that quarter; and on our extreme right, Picton, with his division, "the fighting 3rd," drove back the French advanced posts on that side and threatened the bridges over the canal; and between Picton and Beresford, General Freyre with his Spaniards was entrusted at his own request with the attack of Pugade, which however he was directed not to commence till Beresford had reached the French right wing and had begun the battle on that side. When the battle did begin it wore at first a most unfavourable appearance. Through impatience or unskilfulness Freyre advanced against St. Pol too soon; the French, though weaker in numbers at that point, fighting with even more than their wonted confidence against troops whom they knew to be their inferiors, met them with such vivacious gallantry that they wavered, recoiled, and presently retreated in headlong confusion.

Wellington, who as usual was at hand wherever he was most wanted, perceived the first symptoms of disorder in their ranks, and turning to one of his staff, asked him whether he had "ever seen 10,000 men running a "race?" He was told, "Never." "Well then," said he, "you will see it now." And his words were verified almost as they were spoken, by the whole division running away in one grand panic. But he had already taken steps to remedy the evil which he had foreseen, bringing up a brigade of cavalry under General Ponsonby and a battery of artillery which he had held in reserve to cover the fugitives; and behind them Freyre, who displayed great personal resolution, rallied his broken columns.

Further on our right fortune also seemed to design to favour the French; for Picton, who was often too impetuous to regard his orders, after driving back the advanced posts, as has been mentioned above, not contented with this advantage, converted what was only intended to be a false attack into a real one, and assaulting the canal bridge, which was strongly fortified, was repulsed with heavy slaughter; so that he required the support of the light division and of a brigade of heavy cavalry, which, after the employment of Ponsonby's brigade as a rallying point for the Spaniards, were the only reserves at Wellington's disposal: should Beresford now meet with any check there were absolutely no means whatever of supporting him. And it was under great disadvantages that that marshal, whose troops were not yet engaged, was pushing onward his resolute advance. The line of his march was narrow, the road was greatly broken up by the recent storms, the country on each side was marshy; he was exposed to the fire of the French batteries on Mont Rave, and in many places to the musketry of their infantry. As he approached

BATTLE
OF
TOULOUSE
MOUNT RAVE
Calvinet
Sypiere
Calarin
Route of Montaudran
Augustins Redoubt
Rte Colombette
Cambon
FAUBOURG
St ETIENNE
CANAL OF LANGUEDOC
Demoiselles
Bridge
Route of Montpellier
FAUBOURG
St MICHEL
L'ERS RIVER
Route of Alby
CROIX
D'ORADE
Pugade
Route of Montauban
Bearnais
Canal of Brienne
CARONNE RIVER
FUABOURG
St CYPRIEN
Route of Murch
549

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St. Sypière, Soult sent Taupin's division against his flank, which descended the hill in the assured expectation of an easy triumph; but the gallant 4th and 6th divisions were men inured to conflict, and bravely faced the advancing foemen, replying to their fire not only with their own muskets, but with rockets, which were as great novelties to Soult's troops as they had been to their comrades at Bayonne; and which here, as there, caused the most universal consternation. Taupin was killed: our men, encouraged by the evident dismay of the enemy, charged up the hill at different points, Cole leading the 4th division, and Lambert and Pack two brigades of the 6th. Nothing could stand before that heroic infantry: the French abandoned even the redoubts, and fled down the hill towards Cambon; and Soult had need now of all his vigour to rally them and to check the pursuit of the triumphant allies.

By this time Vivian's Hussars had forced a bridge over the Ers beyond the southern extremity of St. Sypière, and were rapidly coming into action on that side, and threatening the bridges over the canal above the city. Soult began to fear for those bridges, and moved a strong reserve to their defence. But the decisive blow was not given there, but on the summit of Mont Rave; for Beresford, as soon as he had made himself master of St. Sypière, moved along its summit, crossed the Lavaur road, and led his victorious battalions against the redoubts on Calvinet. The struggle was fierce; the British won both redoubts, but Harispe, who commanded on that part of the hill, collected a mighty force, and for a while recovered one. Soon he too fell dangerously wounded, and again the redoubt was taken, and Calvinet, as well as St. Sypière, remained in our possession.

Leaving a small force to hold the works on Sacarin and

Cambon, Soult withdrew the rest of his army across the canal, and left the field of battle and one gun to the allies as the tokens of their victory. It had been a hard-fought battle and a dearly-won triumph: so strong had been the French position that the loss sustained by the allies in carrying it exceeded by one half that of the French who had defended it; but the result had convinced Soult that all attempt to resist the further progress of the allies was unavailing. And finding that Wellington, who went the next day to Hill's division to make arrangements for an attack upon the city, was at the same time moving his light cavalry, which had scarcely suffered in the battle, to cut off his retreat towards the interior, he feared that he should be entirely surrounded; and during the night of the 11th evacuated the city, leaving behind him Harispe and 1,600 of his wounded men (whom he recommended to Wellington's humanity), his heavy artillery, and enormous stores of all kinds, and retreated towards Carcassonne, marching with such speed that on the evening of the 12th he established his head-quarters at Villefranche, twenty-two miles from Toulouse.

Wellington at once sent Hill with his division in pursuit of him: and with the rest of his army proceeded to take possession of Toulouse. There were no longer any troops in it except the soldiers of the city guard, and they as well as the citizens were inclined to receive him as a friend rather than as a conqueror. They had in general provided themselves with white scarfs and cockades, and, headed by the mayor, awaited his entrance at the principal gate of the city, with the intention of giving him a formal and triumphant reception; but he, wishing perhaps, as was his custom, to avoid the display, passed into the city with a small escort by a less

grand way, and went quietly to the Guildhall, whither the mayor presently followed him. The mayor read to him a brief address, requesting him to receive the keys of the city in the name of Louis XVIII., and to make a favourable report to that prince of the love and respect with which the citizens of Toulouse regarded him, and which had only been increased by the twenty years of suffering through which they had passed; and entreated him in his own person to accept the homage of their unlimited gratitude for his great, generous, and unexampled conduct.

Wellington's reply was still marked with the greatest caution. He said that the sovereigns whom he served had been engaged only in a defensive war, forced on them by the injustice of the existing Government of France; that their sole object was peace, "peace founded "on the independence of their respective states, and of "all the powers of Europe. And that he believed that "at that moment their ambassadors, in concert with "those of their allies in the north of Europe, were "engaged in negotiating such a peace, should it be "possible to conclude it with the existing Government of "France." He saw, he added, that many of the citizens of Toulouse were eager to follow the example of those of Bordeaux, to shake off the yoke of Napoleon, and "to "aid in the restoration of the legitimate line of the "Bourbons." . . . "But, after the announcement which "he had just made to them, they must decide for themselves how far they chose to declare their wishes. "Should they declare them, it would be his duty to "consider them as allies, and to give them all the assistance in his power as long as the war should last; but "it was equally his duty to inform them, that should "peace be made with the existing Government of France,

" it would no longer be in his power to give them any " aid or assistance whatever."*

Though his speech was manifestly intended to check the sanguine expectations of the citizens, it had very little of such an effect; and an invitation which he gave them all to a public ball in the evening, rekindled all their enthusiasm: they vied with one another in the cordiality of their reception of all ranks of our army, freely opening their houses to them without waiting for billets, and filling the streets with cheers at the sight of every scarlet uniform. Toulouse seemed drunk with joy, and to crown it, at five o'clock a British officer arrived from Paris with authentic accounts of Napoleon's abdication, and of the re-establishment of the Bourbons. Before the ball, Wellington gave a grand dinner to some of his chief officers of all the allied nations, and several of the principal citizens of Toulouse, and after reading to his guests the despatch which he had just received proposed the health of Louis XVIII. It was received as was natural with great demonstrations of joy; but it was not the toast of the evening; for presently General Alava, in a speech of enthusiastic panegyric, proposed Wellington's own health as the "Deliverer of Spain," and in a moment the whole company rose in tumultuous rapture, cheering and hailing him in as many languages as were ever heard around one dinner-table, as the Deliverer of Spain, the Deliverer of Portugal, the Deliverer of France, the Deliverer of Europe. He made no speech in

* It is well known that Soult has often been accused of having fought the battle of Toulouse after he knew of Napoleon's abdication; and many writers, among whom is Sir W. Napier, have defended him by sufficiently convincing arguments; but none of them have noticed the address of Wellington here given in the text, which, of all circumstances, affords the most irrefragable exculpation of the French marshal, showing, as it does, that even two days after the battle Wellington was ignorant of Napoleon's abdication, and did not believe peace with him to be yet out of the question.

reply, but to follow the account of an eye-witness,* being never very fond of hearing his own praises, only bowed, looked confused, and called for coffee; thinking perhaps that "the sober berry's juice" might in some degree allay the excitement which he in his modesty attributed partly to the champagne.

Between the dinner and the ball the company adjourned to the theatre, where again he was received with loud applause, which grew into a perfect uproar when it was seen that he wore a white cockade in his hat; while at the conclusion of the play God save the King was performed by the orchestra, probably for the first time that that glorious air was ever welcomed by a French audience.

The hounds kept up with the rest of the staff, and for some days there was little done but hunting, feasting, and dancing. Soult was so difficult to convince of the reality of the change of Government which had taken place, that for a day or two it seemed doubtful whether Wellington, who was exceedingly indignant at his conduct, "as prolonging the miseries of war without an "object," would not think it necessary to continue his operations against him; but on the 18th the French commander sent General Gazan to Toulouse to announce his submission to the restored dynasty, and the war was over. Before the end of the month, the Duc d'Angoulême arrived and was received with great pomp; and the next day Suchet also came from Catalonia. He made a more favourable impression on his former foes than Soult, who did not come as soon as had been expected, and whose generally morose aspect gave apparent indication that he was far from reconciled to the failure of his late

* Larpent, ii., 138, to whose most interesting diary (to save the trouble of frequent reference) the author is indebted for many of the details of the events of this period.

campaign. The two marshals and all their generals were received with cordial frankness by Wellington, but could scarcely conceal their astonishment at his unpretending demeanour, and at the manifest dislike of state or parade which he showed on all occasions. Their own ante-rooms were crowded with aides-de-camp in waiting, and they themselves blazed all day in all the glitter of gold lace and orders; while at the British General's head-quarters, with the exception of the secretaries who were actually at work, there was often not an officer to be found; and he himself never, except on state occasions, attired in any but the plainest uniform, was always most pleased when he could discard that also, and walk about the streets in plain clothes, making his unpretending way among the crowd, of whom few recognized the mighty conqueror, whom, far above their own commanders, they all delighted to honour.

It was probably in some degree owing to his apparent popularity with all classes of Frenchmen, as well as to the manifold proofs which he had given of his solid judgment on all subjects, and of his unfailing tact united at the same time to the firmness necessary in dealing with princes not unnaturally greatly elated at their unexpected triumph, that the ministry selected him as the first ambassador to be sent to the court of the restored Louis. He declared with truth that it was "a situation for which "he should never have thought himself qualified," and at the same time, with his characteristic sense of duty, that "he was ready to serve the Government in any "situation in which it might be thought that he could "be of any service," and at the end of April he left Hill in command and went to Paris; though not prepared as yet to enter upon his new duties. Indeed, before doing so, he was required to essay his diplomatic talents in

another quarter; and after some necessary discussions on the state of affairs with Lord Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary, who had been in France for some time as the British plenipotentiary for negotiating with our own allies and with the French Government, and had not yet returned to England, he was despatched to Madrid, where the inability of Ferdinand to appreciate the change wrought by the events of the last seven years in his own position and in the temper of the nation threatened to cause serious embarrassments, not only to himself, but to Europe in general. To so pompous a nation as the Spaniards, it was probably not unimportant that on the termination of the war Wellington had been raised to the highest rank in the peerage of his own country, and had been made a Duke, still retaining the same territorial designation which, as Viscount, Earl, and Marquess, he had made so widely and unprecedentedly illustrious. He was received by Ferdinand with the most ostentatious gratitude. His rank as a Grandee of Spain was recognized and confirmed; he was shaken by the hand, was admitted to private conferences at which both the King and himself were seated and covered; and his Majesty, professing that to him alone he owed his restoration to his throne, declared that the only measures of the Cortes which, during his absence from his kingdom had been tolerable in his eyes, were those which made Wellington the Commander of his armies, and gave him his estate in Granada.

But in spite of this outward civility and condescension, Wellington soon perceived that he had no real influence at Madrid. That unhappy court was already split into two parties, and the army with its most distinguished generals was equally divided. Of the King's own capacity he gradually conceived a better opinion than he had originally entertained; but his ministers he at once saw

to be as incapable, wrong-headed, and obstinate as any counsellors who had ever been entrusted with the interests of a kingdom. He began to suspect that "something had passed of which they were ashamed "in their negotiation at Valençay with Buonaparte," when the French emperor restored Ferdinand to his liberty, and which they were desirous of concealing: since it was quite plain that the ministers at all events, and probably the King also, were not desirous to connect themselves with England; but, strange as it appeared, were rather disposed to a French alliance, while both King and ministers were inclined to treat all who had obeyed not only the usurper Joseph, but even the decrees of the National Cortes, as guilty of treason; though Wellington told them with truth that he himself was as guilty in that respect as any one, since he had always obeyed the Cortes till Ferdinand, "by his decree of the "4th of May, had taken the government upon himself."

The objects of his mission were twofold: to incline the King to a liberal policy towards his own subjects, prominent parts of which were the establishment of the independence of the judges; the declaration of an amnesty to those guilty of political offences with very few exceptions; an immediate and fair trial of those excepted; and the convocation of the National Cortes: and in the second place to give Ferdinand and his ministers a proper sense of the importance of a close alliance with England to the permanence of their own power as well as to the prosperity of the kingdom. Accordingly, he laid before the King a paper, by the soundness of its reasoning, as well as by the perspicuity of its language, abundantly justifying the sagacity which had selected him for so delicate a mission: with respect to the measures of domestic policy which he desired to

see adopted, he contented himself with pointing out that they had been all promised to the Spanish people on his Majesty's return to his kingdom: but on the subject of the alliance with Great Britain he entered more into detail. He pointed out that nothing could contribute so much to the revival of Spanish commerce as an unrestricted trade with a country at once so rich and so eminent for the excellence of her manufactures: that such a connection would also more than anything else facilitate the settlement of the relations of Spain with her colonies, her connection with which had unavoidably been greatly loosened by the events of the recent war; that in the disputes likely to arise between Spain and the United States of America, which had unjustifiably seized some of the Spanish possessions in that quarter of the globe, no interposition could be as effectual as ours: and lastly, using an argument often found most powerful with states as well as with individuals, that if Spain should want money, as she surely would, it would be found impossible to obtain a loan without the countenance and assistance of Great Britain. He also urged, that besides the fact that the exhausted state to which France had been reduced by the war rendered her incapable of being of much service to Spain in any way for some time, the injuries which the French armies had inflicted on the country must inevitably make an alliance with France very unpopular, and that its unpopularity would greatly increase the difficulties of Ferdinand's situation. He admitted frankly that a good understanding and a close alliance with Spain were highly important to Great Britain, and that she was willing to make sacrifices to obtain it; while he reminded the King, with a force which in his mouth might have been expected to be irresistible, "that there was no act of kindness which

"might not be expected from such an ally;" but he added at the same time, that "it could not be expected of "Britain that she would take any steps for the firm "establishment of a government which she should see "in the fair way of connecting herself with her rival, "and of eventually becoming her enemy."

There were one or two topics relating to the foreign policy of Spain, such as her desire to obtain restitution of Parma, which Napoleon had wrested from her, and even of Naples, which had long been separated from her crown, of which he took scarcely any notice beyond the remark that the little advantage which Spain had ever derived from the relationship subsisting between her princes and the Neapolitan royal family, was a proof how "little it suited the interests of Spain to push political "objects beyond the boundary of her natural limits."

He did not flatter himself that his arguments would have much weight with such a government in such a temper. His brother Henry did indeed shortly afterwards conclude a treaty with Spain, binding that power not to renew the family compact (as it had been called) with France; to replace her commercial relations with Great Britain on their ancient footing; and to take into consideration the abolition of the slave trade: but so little regard was paid to his recommendation of conciliatory treatment towards the party whom the ministers accused of disloyalty previously to Ferdinand's restoration, that in the autumn they actually threw General Alava into prison for his obedience to the Cortes, and ordered the arrest of Mina at Paris, apparently for the same offence. Wellington at once wrote a strong letter to the King himself, bearing most honourable testimony to Alava's constant loyalty, and to the assiduity and value of his services during the war, throughout which he had

continually resided at the British head-quarters as agent of the Spanish Government; and his energetic remonstrances procured his friend's liberty, while the French Government compelled the Spanish ambassador to release Mina. But the attempt of the Spanish Government thus to exercise their malice on two men who had served their country with fidelity showed them to be wholly destitute of equity, humanity, and even of common sense, and produced an impression very injurious to them in many of the subsequent negotiations and events.

At the beginning of June, Wellington quitted Spain and repaired to Bordeaux, to give his last instructions for the embarkation of the British infantry. The cavalry, in compliance with a request made at his suggestion by Lord Castlereagh, Louis permitted to march to Calais. As the Spanish troops had by this time recrossed the frontier and entered their own country, he resigned his post as Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish armies by a letter to the King, in which he spoke in as favourable terms as truth would allow of the zeal of the Spanish generals, and of "the military virtues "of the Spanish soldiers," and assured his Majesty of his willingness again to serve him, though he hoped that Ferdinand might never again have occasion for his services.

It remained for him to take leave of his own army, which can hardly have been done without exciting painful feelings in the breasts, both of the commanded and of the commander. No army had ever done more for its chief; no general had ever done more for his army. For five long years they had battled together against those French veterans who had subdued every country on the continent of Europe; led by those redoubted marshals who, till they encountered him, had never found an

equal on the battle-field; and yet those five years had been years of continued victory and triumph, scarcely interrupted by a single check, never once tarnished by defeat or disaster. The regiments had not indeed displayed at all times the rigid discipline, order, and moderation which are required to make up the character of a perfect soldier; but under every circumstance they had exhibited the most dauntless courage, the most heroic resolution; they had encountered danger without flinching, they had borne privation without murmuring, and by their glorious conduct on the field and in the breach, they had raised their general to a height of glory surpassed by that of no warrior in the history of the world. Nor did they owe less to him. Not only was it his daring that had conceived their mighty deeds, his genius which had secured their accomplishment, but it was his firm unchanging love of justice and order which had in great measure endowed them with the qualities by which they had achieved them. If he owed his glory to them, to him they also, and the whole army, owed the renown which they now enjoyed over the world. Till he became their leader, the belief, not only on the Continent, but in their own country, was that Britain's "home was in the deep,"* that however invincible Britons might be "on the mountain wave," by land they were but inapt scholars in military science, and no match for the gallant grenadiers who had planted the French standards on the walls of almost every capital in Europe. He showed his country that British valour was the same by land as by sea, that no more on shore

* Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is in the deep.—*Campbell.*

than on the deep did Britain need any bulwarks or towers save those which Providence had provided for her in the indomitable hearts of her sons. And he wrung from the whole world, from foeman as well as from allies, the confession, that the British soldiers too are still as invincible as in the days of Crécy and Agincourt, and that still nought but discomfiture and woe awaited all who came into conflict with them as enemies.

In the general order which he issued on the occasion of his departure, he proclaimed his own satisfaction, which he felt that every individual in the army must partake with him, at the share which they had in restoring peace to the world, and at the high character which they had maintained in all the countries in which they had been engaged. He thanked them all cordially and frankly, as one who felt that he himself was under obligations to them. And he assured them, that however "circumstances might alter the relations in which he "had hitherto stood towards them so much to his "satisfaction, he should never cease to feel the warmest "interest in their welfare and honour." And he subsequently showed that these were no empty words, as, indeed, words from his mouth rarely were; since his published correspondence for some months is full of proofs of his zeal to promote their wishes, whether by obtaining honours for regiments, such as permission to bear on their standards the names of victories to which their gallantry had contributed, promotion for individual officers, or such recompense as could be afforded for those who had lost relations in the war; because, to use his own words on one of these occasions, "he should have "been most ungrateful if he had not been ready to apply "for promotion for the gallant officers who had served "under his command."

CHAPTER XXX.

Wellington reaches England—He surveys the frontier of the Netherlands—Exerts himself for the abolition of the slave trade—Precarious state of public affairs in Europe—Conspiracies are formed against Wellington—He goes to Vienna—Napoleon returns from Elba—Wellington proposes the renewal of the treaty of Chaumont—He departs to take the command of the army in the Netherlands.

LEAVING Lord Dalhousie to superintend the embarkation of the troops, Wellington returned to England, which he reached on the 23rd of June, where he found the whole nation in a perfect delirium of exultation and revelry. The Prince Regent had invited the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, the veteran Marshal Prince Blucher, Platoff, the Hetman of the Cossacks, and other princes, statesmen, and warriors who had borne a part in the war now so happily terminated to visit him in London on their return from Paris to their respective countries, and was doing the honours of his kingdom to them with the most splendid hospitality. Banquets, spectacles, and honours greeted them in every direction. They were made Knights of the Garter at Carlton House, and Doctors of Civil Law at Oxford; while the people at large vindicated their share in their sovereign's hospitality, and ratified the honours conferred upon them by the most enthusiastic reception of them wherever they appeared in public. But on Wellington's return to England the

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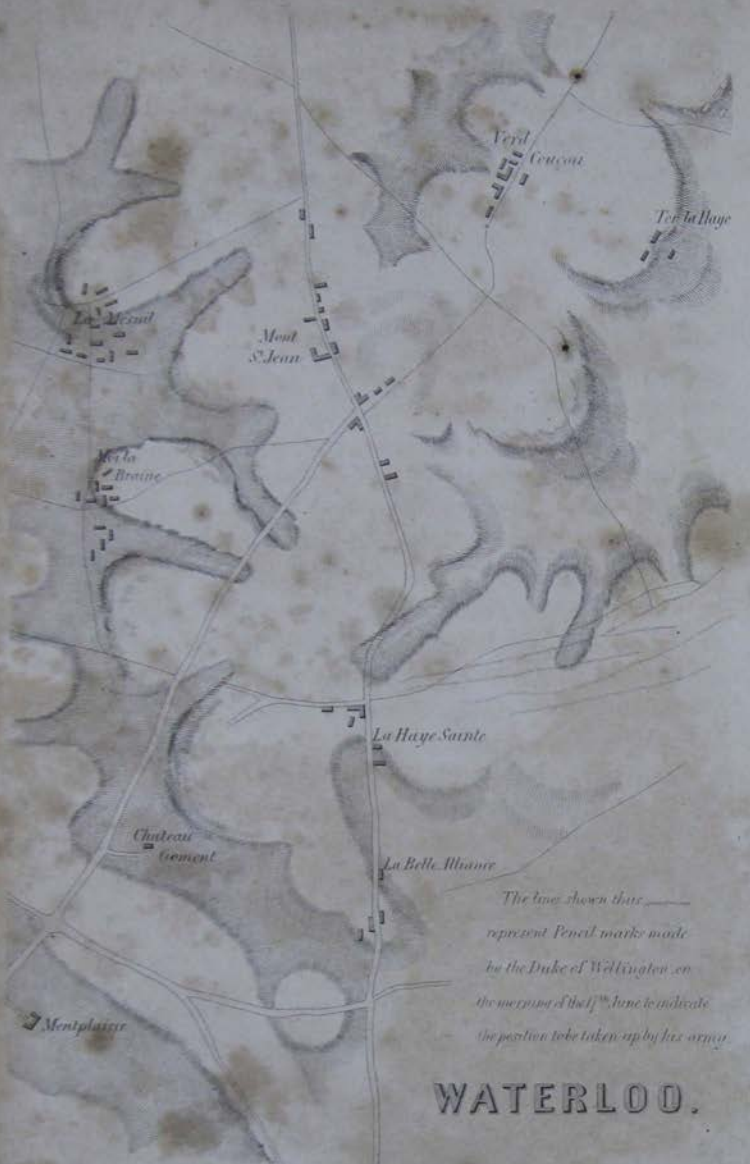
popular acclamations were turned into another channel. He was their own hero, and their national pride in him as such overbore all other feelings, whether of hospitality or of curiosity. When he first reached London the people drew his carriage through the streets, and when he alighted they bore him on their shoulders into his house. When the Prince Regent went in state to St. Paul's, after the thanksgiving of the nation to God for the re-establishment of peace, he was selected to bear the sword of state at his right hand. When he took his seat in the House of Lords, the Chancellor once more gave him the thanks of his brother peers for his great deeds, and reminded his hearers of the unprecedented circumstance that their new brother, on thus coming among them for the first time, came in the highest rank which any subject not of the blood royal could attain, having, in only five years, successively won from his sovereign every step in the peerage by his own unrivalled exploits.

The House of Commons, which had already testified its appreciation of his services by a grant of 400,000*l.* to purchase an estate, sent a deputation to congratulate him on his safe return from a scene which had been almost as full of danger as of glory; and by an unprecedented vote admitted him to deliver his thanks to them in person. Accordingly, on the 1st of July, he presented himself in the House, which had never exhibited a more crowded or more splendid appearance, and in a short and graceful speech expressed his gratitude for the applause with which they had constantly "animated his "exertions;" for their splendid liberality in "conferring "upon him the noblest gift that any subject had ever "received;" and his "admiration of the great efforts "made by the House and by the country at a moment of "unexampled pressure and difficulty, in order to support

"the great scale of operations by which the contest was "brought to so fortunate a termination." Nor did he forget to do justice to "the bravery of the officers and troops" under his command, his reliance on which had enabled him to conduct his operations to their successful issue.

The reply of the Speaker, Mr. Abbot, has often been quoted as a singularly felicitous instance of the performance of the most difficult of all tasks for an orator, the praising a great man to his face. He said truly that "his military triumphs it was needless that day to "recount; their names had been written by his own "conquering sword in the annals of Europe, and his "countrymen would hand them down with exultation to "their children's children. But," he with equal truth added, "it was not the grandeur of military success "which had alone fixed their admiration or commanded "their applause," but rather "that generous and lofty "spirit which inspired his troops with unbounded con-"fidence, and taught them to know that the day of "battle was a day of victory; that moral courage and "enduring fortitude, which, in perilous times, when "gloom and doubt had beset ordinary minds, stood "nevertheless unshaken; and that ascendency of cha-"racter, which, uniting the energies of jealous and rival "nations, enabled him to wield at will the fate and for-"tunes of mighty empires."

After a short stay in England, Wellington went to Paris, to enter upon his new duties as ambassador, taking the Netherlands in his way, by the desire of the Government, in order to examine the means of defence possessed by that country, where it was proposed to reunite the Dutch and Belgic provinces so as again to form one kingdom under the sovereignty of the King of



WATERLOO.

Fac simile d'a portion of a plan of the Entire plain of Waterloo made by our Engineers in September 1814 by command of the Duke of Wellington

1814.
Holland. An opinion had lately been advanced, that the usefulness of strong fortresses bore no proportion to the expense of their construction and maintenance, which, however, found no favour in his eyes as a general rule, and which he considered most especially inapplicable to the case of such a country as the Netherlands; and he supported his views by a reference to the campaigns of the French in 1792 and 1794 in that country. He argued that the recency of the establishment of the new kingdom was calculated of itself to produce a feeling of unsettled insecurity among the inhabitants, and at the same time to serve as a temptation to the French to attack them, which would be greatly weakened by the knowledge that the country was strongly fortified, and that therefore it would not afford an easy conquest to an invader. And as, after the most careful examination, he had been able to find no single situation which could cover the whole country, he recommended an adherence to the old principle of a chain of fortresses and the repair of the ancient fortifications, with the addition of those improvements which modern science had devised. At the same time he pointed out several good positions, which, if occupied by an adequate army, might enable it to offer a formidable resistance to a French invasion, which was naturally the danger most to be apprehended. And it is especially worthy of remark that one of those which he now mentioned was "the entrance of the forest of Soignies by the high-road "which leads to Brussels from Binch, Charleroi, and "Namur," being the very one of which he was himself destined, in less than ten months afterwards, so gloriously to prove the value by his crowning victory on the field of Waterloo. So highly indeed did he estimate the eligibility of this plain in front of Waterloo as a

field of battle if ever a French invasion should threaten Brussels, that he employed some of our engineers to make a careful sketch of the whole ground, directing that from them two regular plans should be drawn out, one for the King of the Netherlands and one for himself; and though the plans were not finished in time, the sketch thus made proved of most essential service to him in the ensuing year.*

The interests of Great Britain as connected with the state of France at this time eminently demanded from our minister at the court of the Tuileries, not only the ordinary ambassadorial requirements of tact, sagacity, and firmness, but also a commanding dignity of character, which, being acknowledged by all parties, might enable him to give efficacious support to, or if occasion should require, to act as a check upon the new Government. As was inevitable so soon after a restoration, brought about, not as in England in 1660, by the reaction which had taken place in the feelings of the nation itself, but by the success of foreign armies, the people were divided, the army was almost universally discontented, and the Government was too weak to heal the divisions or to allay the discontent. With a view probably of acquiring a little popularity, though the treaty which had been just concluded was that which had restored Louis to his throne, the ministers sought to evade the performance of some of its provisions, such as those which guaranteed to the British creditors of the Government before the revolution a fair satisfaction of their claims, or which bound the restored King to surrender all those territories which did not fall within the ancient frontiers of the kingdom as they existed in January, 1792. On both these subjects Wellington addressed such energetic remon-

* See infra, p. 616.

strances to the ministers to whose departments they belonged as to procure immediate compliance with his demands. But the matter which occupied the chief share of his attention while he remained at Paris, was one on which he found it more difficult to win acquiescence to the views which he was instructed and desirous to advocate

After many years of intense devotion to the cause of which he had constituted himself the advocate, Wilberforce had some years before procured the passing of an Act by the British Parliament entirely abolishing the slave trade as far as British subjects were concerned in it. But his extended philanthropy was not satisfied with a measure which, as we were far from being the principal slave dealers, produced but little diminution of the sufferings of the negroes. And, seeing in the great services which we had rendered to France, Spain, and Portugal, and in the re-establishment of the Governments of all those countries through our means, an opportunity of pressing on them the adoption of a line of conduct similar to our own, he easily prevailed on the ministers, who were as deeply imbued as himself with the conviction of the atrocity of the traffic, to give Wellington instructions to endeavour by all the means in his power to procure Louis' consent to a law prohibiting his subjects from engaging in it, and declaring it to be piracy.

But the public mind in France was far from being sufficiently informed on the subject to enable the sovereign of that country to make such a concession. It was only after many years of repeated discussion, during which the great advocate of the freedom of all the human race had endured not only every conceivable species of disappointment and discouragement, but an amount of calumny and obloquy which very few but himself would

ever have encountered and withstood in the cause of others, that the question of Abolition had been carried in England. And in France it had now to contend, not only with the same ignorance of the subject on the part of the indifferent public, and with the same thirst for sordid gain on the part of those interested in the continuance of the traffic which had existed among ourselves; but with an additional prejudice arising from the mere fact of its being so warmly advocated by us. Our zeal on the subject was absurdly misunderstood by all classes in foreign countries. Some "attributed it to commercial "jealousy, and to a desire to keep the monopoly of colonial "produce in our own hands." Others, including even one of the French ministers, told Wellington himself that "our object was to get recruits to fight our battles "in America;" and hinted "that a man might as well be "a slave for agricultural labour as a soldier for life." No one in the country conceived for a moment that we had abolished the trade ourselves, or were now urging them to abolish it, from motives of mere humanity. Louis himself, and several of his ministers professed a willingness to check it, and Wellington believed them to be sincere in their professions; but he was also aware that they spoke the truth when they told him that they did not as yet dare to put themselves in opposition to the wishes of the people.

It is evident that it was a subject on which Wellington himself felt a very warm interest. And by his untiring exertions he brought the French Government at last to consent to prohibit the traffic at once on that part of the African coast which lies between Cape Blanco and Cape Formoso; where, since our capture of Senegal and Goree had in a great measure extinguished it, we had made some progress in civilizing the inhabitants, but

where our restoration of those colonies to the French was calculated to revive it, if some express provision were not made to the contrary. And they further agreed to abolish it entirely in five years.

For some months after the restoration, the King and his Government appeared in a very weak and tottering state; and it was evident to so acute an observer as Wellington that the seeds of future disturbance were far from being eradicated. The Revolution, and its consequences, he said, had so utterly ruined the country, and had produced such universal poverty that the discontent which existed could hardly avoid being as permanent as it was general. The new Government with its exhausted resources and contracted dominions (for France had been obliged to restore nearly all her conquests of the last quarter of a century) had no occasion for, nor, if it had required them, could it have found the means of maintaining a quarter of the number of soldiers bequeathed to it by Napoleon; a great number also of civil functionaries had been thrown out of employment by the restoration, and the emigrants who had returned to their country were destitute of means of support, and were actually "dying of hunger." In fact, as the Duke reported to his employers at home, "more than three-fourths of that part of the population "which was not employed in manual labour or in agri- "culture, were in a state of indigence, consequently of "discontent." And though the appointment of Soult to be Minister of War infused great vigour into that department of the Government, and removed from the minds of the partisans of a republic or of the empire all apprehensions of any secret designs being cherished against them, it could have no effect in relieving the general distress which, if unremoved, could hardly fail to be the parent of danger to the state.

Nor was it quite free from external perils. Murat, who was still in possession of the throne of Naples, being not unnaturally alarmed for the stability of his power, and being also so slenderly endowed with political capacity as to be an easy prey for the artifices of designing intriguers, was restless and wavering; and, among other measures, was taking steps greatly to augment the strength of his army, while Napoleon, who could not possibly be expected to be contented with his altered fortunes, was most unwisely furnished with legitimate grounds for complaint, by the neglect of the French Government to make any provision for the payment of the pensions which had been guaranteed to him and to his family when he relinquished the throne of France for that of Elba. It seemed doubtful whether he might not quit Elba and repair to Italy, where Murat's army might be expected to prove a formidable instrument in his hands; though some persons doubted the existence of any real harmony between the two brothers-in-law, and expected their mutual jealousy to prove a safeguard to the peace of Europe on that side. Wellington was of a different opinion, and urged his Government to consider whether it might not be possible to remove Murat from his throne; believing that "if he were gone, Napoleon "at Elba would not be an object of great dread." He did not anticipate, what no one could have foreseen, the universal revolt of the French army; and thought therefore that if Napoleon should quit Elba, he would do so principally in reliance on Murat's co-operation. And holding this opinion, though he admitted it to be a delicate matter for us to appear in as principals while Austria was satisfied with Murat's conduct, he was very anxious that we should disregard that difficulty, and, in combination with France, send such an army into Italy as should

be too strong for Murat to be able to resist, and which should therefore attain its objects without the necessity of striking a blow. He entered into all the details of the expedition which he suggested; and pressed upon the ministers that to leave Murat at Naples was to endanger the peace of Europe. There can be little doubt that he was right in this opinion, though from the course which events subsequently took, Napoleon neither derived nor desired assistance from his brother-in-law.*

And though it may seem for a moment inconsistent in so rigid a lover of justice to have proposed a measure at first sight so little equitable as the dethronement of a sovereign merely because his connections made it probable that he might become dangerous, we must remember that nothing less than the peace of the whole world was involved in Murat's conduct. And when such momentous interests were at stake it is clear that even justice, which founds one of its most practical claims to support on the fact that the common advantage of all mankind is concerned in its maintenance, might on this occasion fairly give way to policy, since above all things the happiness of Christendom depended on the permanency of peace so long broken and so lately and so hardly re-established.

As the winter wore on, the state of parties in France, in Wellington's opinion, was fraught with more than one danger to the peace of Europe. He looked upon it as doubtful whether, with a view to divert the general discontent into another channel, Louis himself might not seek for war† with some of the allied powers; and he believed that the Comte de Blacas, at that time the most influential of the French ministers, was a decided

* See Castlereagh's Despatches, Nov. 21, 1814.
† Ib., x. 160.

advocate of such a measure; since, besides his desire to find a safety-valve for the ill feeling existing in France, he was greatly offended with Russia on the ground of his claims upon Poland.

Over the King himself, Wellington had obtained great influence; so great indeed as, much to the scandal of his chamberlains, to induce Louis occasionally to depart from the established etiquette of the French court. And one instance shows in a remarkable manner the consideration which the Duke at all times showed to those of his own profession, whether his own countrymen or foreigners. Not only had Louis admitted him, though a subject, to his dinner-table, but he had even invited himself to meet the King of Prussia as Wellington's guest. The Duke cheerfully prepared to receive both his illustrious visitors; but on the morning of the projected entertainment a difficulty arose, for an officer of the royal household who came, according to the usage of the court, to see that all things were in due order, found a cover laid for which he was unable to account, and on inquiring learnt that it was for the officer on guard at the Duke's gate; the compliment of a guard of honour having been paid him by the Government during his residence in Paris. The chamberlain at once pronounced that for a king of France to dine with one of his own subjects was impossible. The Duke's steward was equally certain of the orders which he had received from his master. When appeal was made to the Duke himself, he, feeling with Major Dalgetty that "a valiant soldado was a camarado "for an emperor," declared that the officer on guard always dined with him, and always must do so. And so it was on this occasion, for though the chamberlain reported the Duke's contumacy to Louis in its details, and besought his Majesty to vindicate his own dignity,

by depriving the foreign commander of the honour of his company, Louis cared more for his dinner than for his dignity, and for the first time since the days of Louis XIV. an untitled officer of the French service sat at table as the worthy companion of his sovereign.

More serious perils arose from the violence of some of the factions adverse to the King's Government. At the beginning of November there were reports which it was difficult altogether to discredit, of a conspiracy being on foot to attack both Louis and himself; and though, as time wore on, rumour so far modified the designs of the conspirators as no longer to represent an attempt on their lives as probable, the new shape which it assumed (indicating the probability of an attempt to overturn the King's Government, and to seize the person of Wellington partly as a hostage to insure the peaceable inaction of the allies, and partly to render their hostility harmless, by depriving them of the only leader of their armies whom the French malcontents dreaded) seemed so much more probable, that Wellington himself entertained a serious belief that some such project was in contemplation.* He reported his opinion to the ministers, and with a frankness which was above pretending an ignorance of his own value, he avowed that he considered his own security an object which it was very desirable to insure; though at the same time that he had no doubt that it was endangered by his continuance in Paris, he saw no means of quitting it without weakening the Government of Louis, both because he was its chief support, and also because his departure would be interpreted as a confession of the inability of that Government to protect him.

His own Government were so alarmed for his safety

* Castlereagh Despatches, p. 186—190.

that they proposed all kinds of expedients to remove him from the scene of danger, one of which at least would have been as disadvantageous to the common cause, in the event of any outbreak in Paris, as his seizure as a hostage by the disaffected party could possibly have proved; the idea entertained being to transfer him to America, where our war with the United States appeared likely to be protracted without any decisive result. Now that with the light of the events of the ensuing summer we can see how all-important his presence in Europe was, it seems perfectly unaccountable how those who were chiefly inspired with such a design by the unsettled condition of France could have avoided seeing that that very condition rendered the removal of Wellington to America a step little short of insanity. Yet (since Lord Castlereagh, who alone of the British ministers appears to have held adequate views of the magnitude of the crisis, was absent at Vienna) it would probably have been adopted, had it not been for the strong remonstrances which Wellington himself made against such a distant employment. He would not say, probably his genuine modesty did not allow him to think, that in the event of the return of Napoleon no one but himself was equal to cope with him; but he was not afraid to urge what the ministers knew to be undeniable, that "in the event of any such occurrence "there was nobody but himself in whom either they, or "the allies, or the country would feel any confidence." As far as he himself was concerned, he declared that he had no objection to go to America, though he did think that the sending him there would lead the world in general to believe that our affairs in that country were in a much worse situation than they really were; and with a judgment, of which events proved the

accuracy, he told them that what they wanted in America was neither a general nor troops (for the portion of his Spanish army which had gone in the spring to that country from Bordeaux was sufficient to encounter all the armies in America; and the generals who commanded them were quite capable of leading them to victory), but such a naval force as should insure to us a superiority on the lakes.

He felt also that if it could be done with safety, it was desirable that he should stay in Paris; since he considered himself as acquiring daily more influence over the French Government, and consequently becoming of more use to Lord Castlereagh in the difficult negotiations which that minister was conducting at Vienna; and Castlereagh himself was of the same opinion, and attributed much of his own success to the managing Talleyrand at Vienna to Wellington's judicious co-operation in Paris.

He very soon also found that a report of the probability of his departure had got abroad, and that it created great uneasiness among the party favourable to Louis; while every one of every party looked upon it as a defeat of the King's Government; and he therefore became very desirous to delay his departure, so as to divest it of all appearance of having been caused by fear; and as five years before he had expressed a wish, if he should be forced to quit Portugal, "to quit it like a gentleman, by "the front door;" so now he felt* his personal character concerned in the manner in which he was to remove, and considered that he had a right to claim of the ministers to do so in the way which should be the most agreeable to his own sense of propriety and dignity.

And while all his attention and vigilance were thus re-

* Castlereagh's Despatches, 202.

quired by these complicated and perplexing affairs, he was not free from personal annoyance, caused by the extraordinary neglect with which he was treated by the military authorities at home. At the beginning of the year 1815 the Prince Regent remodelled the Order of the Bath; and though in the fresh distribution of honours which took place on the occasion, many officers were included as a reward for their services in the Peninsular war, no reference whatever was made to Wellington to ascertain the positive or relative merits of those thus distinguished. The consequence was that many deserving officers were passed over in favour of others less meritorious, and of some by no means entitled to any honorary distinction whatever, and that naturally the greatest discontent was excited, not only among the officers who considered themselves unfairly slighted, but also among the regiments to which they belonged, who looked upon the injustice done to their commanders as in some degree a reflection on their own good conduct; while, as every one naturally supposed that the distribution of these honours had been made in compliance with Wellington's advice, the unpopularity caused by the want of judgment displayed in it fell chiefly upon him. Two of the officers thus passed over wrote to him on the subject, one of them even in reproachful terms, imputing the mortification which he had received to his partiality and injustice. Wellington could hardly have felt otherwise than greatly annoyed at the whole transaction; yet nothing could be more admirable than the temper which he showed, or than the rigid fairness with which, while displeased with the letter, he did full justice to the military deserts of the writer. He told him in reply that "it had pained "him to read such reproaches and charges of injustice. "That he himself had never been consulted on the sub-

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"ject; that it had been at all times his earnest desire to do "justice to every officer and soldier whom he had had the "honour of commanding." And making every allowance for the irritation which the officer had naturally felt in considering his own case, he assured him "that its ex-"pression, however unjust to himself, and unpleasant "to his feelings, had not made him forget the services "which that officer and his brave corps had rendered "upon every occasion on which they had been called "upon." And at the same time he wrote to the Secretary of State, that the two officers who complained of being thus passed over were, in spite of the "imprudent "letter" of one of them, "among the most respectable in "the army;" that they had deserved the honour of which they were so desirous far more than many who had received it; and that had he been consulted on the subject, he should not have omitted their names.

In the mean time, while the discussions about his removal from Paris were proceeding, the agitation in Paris appeared to subside so much as to facilitate his wish to depart in a leisurely and dignified manner; though he still continued of opinion that it was desirable that he should be removed, since his presence in Paris was clearly viewed with disfavour by a numerous and influential party. Accordingly it was settled that he should remain at Paris till January; and then, as the time approached for the meeting of Parliament, at which Lord Castlereagh's presence would be almost indispensable, he was to proceed to Vienna to take that minister's place as the representative of Great Britain at the congress still assembled in that city.

He reached the Austrian capital at the end of January, but the most important affairs for the consideration of which the congress had originally been assembled had

been settled before his arrival. He found the Emperor of Russia in a state of great irritation against England and Austria for opposing his designs upon Poland; and still more offended with the French monarch for adopting their views, so that he began to talk openly of the incapacity of Louis to comprehend the alterations which the French Revolution had produced in the relative position of the different European monarchies, and of the advantages that might be derived from putting the Duke of Orleans in his place; and it soon appeared that there was already a party in France, including probably many of the old Republicans, who were advocating such a change of dynasty. Prussia supported the views of the Russian emperor; and so angry became the tone of the discussions on the subject, that there seemed no small danger of the congress being dissolved by the principal parties in it declaring war against one another, when an event took place which compelled them all to lay aside all minor differences, and again to unite for their mutual preservation. On the 7th of March a despatch reached Wellington from Lord Burghersh, the British minister at Florence, announcing that Napoleon had quitted Elba; that with an army of about 1,000 men he had landed on the French coast near Frejus on the 1st of March; and that he was hastening towards Paris.

All discussion of less pressing matters was at once postponed to the task of providing against the immediate danger with which the sovereigns and ministers assembled at Vienna saw this event to be fraught to the peace of Europe. They did not as yet anticipate the universal revolt of the French army in his favour, and his consequently unresisted progress to and reoccupation of Paris. But they were aware that he had still a numerous host of partisans, and also that the discontent so widely

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spread throughout France afforded a great probability that many more might join him through a dislike of the existing Government; and they wisely judged that it was of the highest importance at once to declare their unanimous resolution to resist the invader of the territories of one of them.

Besides Louis XVIII., whose sovereignty was thus directly aimed at, others of the monarchs negotiating at Vienna felt the return of Napoleon as a personal indignity. The Emperor of Austria, because, as he advanced, he declared that his conduct was sanctioned by that monarch, who was prepared to support him with a large army: and Alexander of Russia, because the establishment of him at Elba had been especially his work; and because he had in some degree pledged himself for Napoleon's peaceable acquiescence in his altered fortunes.

Britain, whose sagacious and resolute minister, Lord Castlereagh, had from the first foreseen the danger of placing him so near the seat of his former power, and who, on that and other grounds, had protested against the measure, might have seemed to superficial or short-sighted politicians as less immediately concerned; but Castlereagh and Wellington, to whom, as Secretary of State and Plenipotentiary at Vienna, her interests were principally entrusted, saw plainly that, if Napoleon should succeed in re-establishing his power, the flames of war would again be rekindled over Europe when the different nations now allied would be less favourably situated for repressing them; and wisely judged that, like other conflagrations, they would never be so easily extinguished as at their first outbreak. Accordingly, before he could receive any directions from home, Wellington took upon himself the responsibility of con-

curring with the ministers of the other powers assembled at the congress in the issue of a declaraition, in which they proclaimed that in "breaking the convention which "had established him at Elba, Buonaparte" (for they now all agreed in refusing him his imperial appellation of Napoleon) "had destroyed the only legal title on which "his existence depended. He had deprived himself of "the protection of the laws, and had shown that it was "impossible to have either peace or truce with him. "Should any real danger arise from this last attempt "of a criminal and impotent frenzy they promised the "King of France and the French nation to furnish them "with all aid necessary for the re-establishment of public "tranquillity, and to make common cause against all who "should endeavour to compromise it. Consequently they "declared that Napoleon Buonaparte had placed himself "out of the pale of civil and social relations, and that as "the enemy and disturber of the peace of the world he "was delivered over to public justice."

At the same time Wellington took upon himself to propose the renewal of the treaty of Chaumont between Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, by which, in the spring of 1814, the amount of the forces which each power engaged to keep in the field against Napoleon had been settled; and although he declared that he had no authority to bind his country to the grant of a subsidy, yet, since he was convinced that the different contracting powers would be unable to move their armies without one, he did not hesitate to express his belief in her ability and willingness to afford them such assistance, and even began to discuss its details. The Emperors of Austria and Russia at once sent despatches to Louis, offering to place their armies at his disposal; and Alexander, who wished the prineipal operations to be carried on as in

the preceding year, by a council consisting of himself, the King of Prussia, and Schwartzenberg, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, expressed a desire, in Wellington's opinion complimentary rather than sincere, that he would join him at that council board. Wellington reported the emperor's request to Lord Castlereagh, with the comment that "as he should have neither character nor occupation "in such a situation, he should prefer to carry a musket." A proposal more generally approved was that of three large armies which it was intended to form, the force on the Lower Rhine, to be composed of Austrians, Prussians, Hanoverian, and British troops, should be placed under his command. And this more nearly coincided with his own notions; as while reporting the various projects to his own Government, he delivered it as his own opinion that they ought at once to put at the disposal of Louis all their force in the Netherlands (for some British regiments, chiefly horse which had served under Graham, were still in that country), and being above pretending to doubt to whose command it must be entrusted, he offered to go himself and join it, saying that, as everything of importance at Vienna was nearly finished, he could start the moment that he should know their wishes.

As the news of Napoleon's rapid progress reached Vienna it increased the unanimity of the allies, and their resolution to exert all their efforts for his overthrow; and their desire that Wellington should be placed at the head of the army to be assembled in the Netherlands assuming a more definite shape, a protocol was drawn up requesting him to proceed to that country for that purpose without loss of time. So earnestly did they express this request, that he at once acceded to it, judging that in so doing he was only anticipating the

wishes of his own Government. Accordingly he at once began to prepare to quit Vienna for Brussels. And in announcing his decision to the ministers at home he urged them to reinforce the army which he was to command to the greatest possible extent.

Not that at any time he felt the slightest uncertainty as to the ultimate event of the coming struggle: in the very first despatch which he wrote after the intelligence of Napoleon's attempt reached him, he pronounced that "he did not entertain the smallest doubt that, even if "Napoleon should be able to form a party for himself in "France capable of making head against the legitimate "government of that country, such a force would be "assembled by the powers of Europe, directed by such a "spirit in their councils, as must get the better of him." But he was anxious for the honour of his country that as she had been the chief cause of Napoleon's first overthrow, she should now play no inferior part in the second defeat of his restless ambition; and he knew by experience how slow she was wont to be in making the first preparations for a new war, how remiss in putting forth her full strength at first, and how severely that slowness and remissness was sure to be eventually expiated. The principles which he now urged upon the ministry are as applicable to the future as to the past. "Nothing," he said, "could be done with a small or "insufficient force; with such the war would linger on, "and would lead to our disadvantage. Motives of "economy, then," he argued, "should induce us to take "measures to bring the largest possible force into action "at the earliest and the same period of time." Already he foresaw the probability that Napoleon's first efforts would be directed against the Netherlands, and so anxious did he feel on the subject of the numbers which

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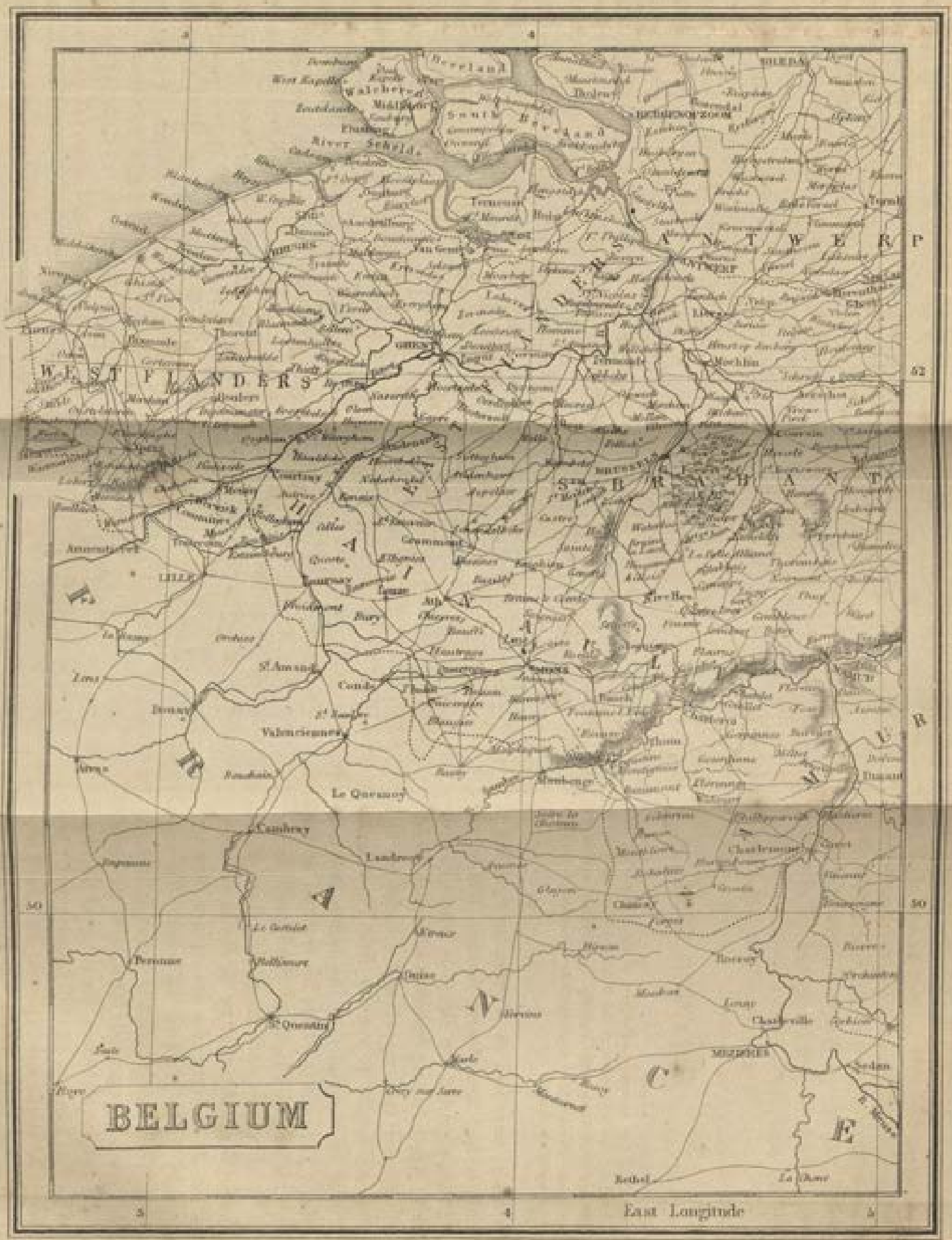
he should be able to oppose to him, that he pressed upon the Portuguese plenipotentiary the propriety of engaging Portugal in the war, and sending him a division of those troops who had fought so well by the side of the British regiments in the Peninsula, and who, it might be hoped had not yet forgotten their discipline or their reliance on their well-proved comrades.

CHAPTER XXXI.

He assumes the command—Position of the Allies—The deficiencies of his army, and the supineness of the Ministry—His plans for the campaign—Blucher takes the command of the Prussians—Napoleon professes to wish for peace—Wellington's great caution—Intrigues of the Duke of Orleans—Feelings of the French army.

HE only remained at Vienna to sign the treaties on which he had agreed with Austria, Russia, and Prussia; and then departed for Brussels, where he arrived on the 4th of April, having travelled with such speed as to outstrip his own messenger; and without giving himself a moment's respite to recover from his fatigue, he began at once to examine into his means and to arrange his plans. The reports which he received of the situation and number and designs of the French emperor were of the most vague and uncertain description; but he thought it possible that he might be already meditating the instant delivery of some sudden blow which it was necessary to be prepared to resist. To meet such an attack Wellington's available force was as yet very small. After providing garrisons for some of the most important of the Belgian fortresses, the army at his disposal would not be found exceed 18,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry; though he might also expect to be joined in a few days by an almost equal number of Dutch and Belgians, on


BELGIUM
WEST FLANDERS
ANTWERP
BRABANT
LIMBURG
LUXEMBURG
Zeeland
South Beveland
Walcheren
River Scheld
Flushing
Middelburg
Veere
Terneuse
Hulst
Bergen op Zoom
Breda
Antwerp
Mechlin
Ghent
Oudenarde
Courtray
Menin
Ypres
Lille
Tournay
Valenciennes
St Amands
Conde
Le Quesnoy
Cambray
Landrecy
Avesnes
Maubeuge
Chimay
Charlemont
Givet
Mezieres
Charleville
Sedan
Rethel
La Chesne
Rocroy
Philippeville
Namur
Dinant
Huy
Liege
Tongres
Maestricht
Hasselt
Diest
Louvain
Brussels
Nivelles
Binch
Mons
Quesnoy
Bavay
Landrecy
Guise
Vervins
Marle
Laon
Rheims
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whose soldier-like qualities he from the first placed no great reliance, though he could hardly as yet divine how utterly worthless they would prove in the hour of trial. There was also a Prussian army of about 30,000 men in the Prussian territories on the western bank of the Rhine; and he at once wrote to Count Kleist, their commander, urging him to unite that force to his own in order to take up a position in front of Brussels, pointing out that such a movement would protect the Netherlands, and cover the concentration of the Russian and German troops on the Rhine, while it would secure them a favourable field of battle should they be attacked without at all limiting the power of moving in any direction which the Prussians at present possessed. Kleist would have preferred that the British if attacked should retire behind Brussels, so as to fall back on his army on the Meuse, to advancing himself; but with the cordial zeal for the general interests which the Prussians showed on every occasion during the campaign, he yielded to Wellington's objections to abandon Brussels even for a moment, and advanced towards the British General, who, in thanking him for his prompt co-operation, assured him of his own disposition at all times to reciprocate it, and opened to him his general idea of the coming campaign.

The Duke pointed out to him the advantage which the number of their frontier fortresses gave the French for the concealment of the amount of the forces which might be assembled behind them; and also that the necessity for combining his movements with the other armies of the allies, whose preparations were not yet in the same state of forwardness, must keep him for the present on the defensive, and must consequently leave the enemy the initiative. If they should advance against him at once, which he now thought less probable

than he had considered it a day or two before, he expected that their line of march would be by the country between the Sambre and the Scheldt; in which case he proposed that the Prussians, forming the left wing of the combined armies, should occupy the ground between Charleroi and Namur, and that in case of any reverse both armies should fall back upon Liége and Maestricht; though this last arrangement was only suggested by his constant care to provide for every conceivable event, since in reality he felt full confidence that "the position in " which the allies now were would secure them against " any attack that could be made by the very greatest " force that any report had as yet represented as being " on the frontier."

He had more difficulty by far in stimulating his own Government to the requisite exertion. Lord Bathurst, on whom, as Secretary of State for war and the colonies, the chief arrangements for the campaign devolved, though an amiable, accomplished, and in some respects able man, was far from being endowed with that vigour of mind or energy of disposition which were indispensable to enable a minister of a mighty country like Britain to grapple creditably and successfully with such a perilous crisis as that which had now arisen. Nor were his colleagues, with the exception of Lord Castlereagh, greatly calculated to supply his deficiencies, being indeed virtuous, upright, well-intentioned, and sensible men, sufficiently versed in the routine of public business to guide the helm of the state in the safe and beaten track of ordinary and peaceful times, but not gifted with that lofty and commanding genius which strikes out for itself new paths when beset with new dangers, and, being only stimulated by difficulty to greater exertion, rises the higher the greater the dangers are which environ it, and shows

itself on all occasions the conqueror and master of circumstances.

Wellington had not been long at Brussels before he found that the troops as yet at his disposal were "not "what they ought to be to maintain our military cha- "racter in Europe." A large portion of them were only second battalions, composed chiefly of recruits and drafts from the militia so recently made that even at Waterloo many of them fought in their old militia accoutrements. And at the same time he was forced to apprehend, from the languor of the preparations which appeared to be making in England, that there was but little hope of their defects being remedied in time. The ministers, as he complained in a letter of strong remonstrance and expostulation to Lord Bathurst, "did not seem to have taken "a clear view of their situation; they did not appear to "think war certain, nor to see that a great effort must "be made if it were hoped that the war would be short." It was true that many of our regiments, including some of the choicest of his old Peninsular army, were unavoidably absent in America; but the ministers had not taken the necessary steps to avail themselves of the force which they had at hand. "They had not called out the militia, "nor announced such an intention, by which the troops "in Ireland and other home quarters might be rendered "disposable for his operations; and how we were to "make up the number of men which by the recent "treaties we had engaged to furnish appeared not to "have been considered."

That the Government had ample means if they chose to exert themselves properly to put them forth, he felt sure. He proceeded to say that "if they could let him have "40,000 good British infantry, besides those which were "to be employed in garrison; 17,000 or 18,000 cavalry,

"including in both the old German Legion, and 150 "pieces of British artillery fully horsed, he should be "satisfied, and would take his chance for the rest, and "engage that we should play our part in the game; "but, as it was," he pronounced that "we were in a bad "way." We shall see hereafter, though it might have been supposed that the unvaried success of his previous campaigns would have lent irresistible weight to his representations on such a matter, how little effect those representations had, and, though ten weeks elapsed between the writing of this letter and the commencement of hostilities, how far even then the force at his command fell short of that which he thus requested, in numbers, in quality, in equipments, in everything in short which renders an army really efficient for so arduous a campaign as that which, on the first morning of battle, there was every reason to expect lay before it.

But the remissness of the Cabinet was not the only evil against which he had to contend: that which arose from the mismanagement of the authorities at the Horse Guards in one most important point, the nomination of officers to the staff, was even more vexatious, and one likely to be attended with most dangerous consequences. The Duke of York had been in many respects a most judicious and efficient military reformer; but he had not yet been able wholly to eradicate intrigue and jobbery from his office, and these mischiefs seem on the present occasion to have been more rife and vigorous than usual. "It had hitherto been the practice of his Royal Highness "to allow those officers who commanded troops, and "for whose assistance the staff was appointed, to "recommend to his notice those officers who were to be "appointed to the staff;" but now, though there certainly never existed a commander more entitled to such

confidence than Wellington, he was not consulted in a single instance,* and some of those sent to join his army as members of the staff were men who had proved themselves wholly unfit for such situations in the Peninsula, and by their conduct there had incurred his disapprobation.

Against all these difficulties, however, he struggled on with a fixed resolution to make the best of them, even while his sense of duty compelled him to state them in all their fulness and danger to the home authorities. In some respects also he had greater facilities for arranging his plans than often fall to the lot of a general, inasmuch as King Louis, who on being driven from Paris had established his court at Ghent, was accompanied by Clarke, Duc de Feltre, to whom after the landing of Napoleon he had transferred Soult's portfolio as minister of war, and who was consequently accurately acquainted with the numbers and situation of the different divisions of the French army, and freely communicated all the information in his possession to the British commander. There were also secret partisans of the Bourbons at Paris who from time to time forwarded him intelligence, which, though perhaps occasionally coloured a little by their wishes, was in its chief particulars sufficiently accurate to be very serviceable. The public conveyances too continued to run from the French to the Belgian capital, and between other towns on both sides of the frontier till the middle of June, so that on the whole his means of obtaining information respecting the enemy were unusually ample, and superior probably to any possessed by the French emperor.

Wellington was never disposed to lose time, and was now more than ever anxious to commence his operations

* Compare Dispatches, vol. xii., p. 316, 340, 348, &c.

at the earliest possible moment; because both in the western and southern provinces of France the adherents of the Bourbons, headed by the princes of the royal family, were making strenuous efforts to uphold their cause, and there was reason to hope that they might prove of considerable service, provided Napoleon's attention should be too much occupied in other quarters to allow him to direct an overpowering force against them. These hopes, indeed, proved fallacious, since the troops on whom the Duc d'Angoulême relied in Languedoc, on the first appearance of some battalions sent against them by Napoleon, refused to fight against the imperial eagles by a similar defection. His Duchess was compelled to quit Bordeaux, the very city in which she had been so triumphantly received only a twelvemonth before; and though some of the Vendean chiefs raised a partial insurrection in that province, it was paralyzed by their own dissensions, and was easily repressed by a small army under the command of General La-Marque. Still the prospect at first opened by these efforts of the royalists was one well deserving the attention of a general who in a former war had seen the extent to which even a peasant warfare when widely spread could distract and embarrass the operations of regular armies; and he was accordingly very eager to prevent these germs of insurrection against Napoleon's new power from being crushed before they had time to produce fruit.

Another reason which influenced him was that Napoleon had summoned an assembly of deputies from every part of France to a festival called Le Champ de Mai, which was to be held at Paris on the 15th of that month, from which he designed to procure a ratification of his authority, and through which Wellington expected that "his means and resources would be considerably

"augmented, especially in men." Wellington therefore desired to commence his own operations on the 1st of May, by which time he calculated that the British, Hanoverian, and Dutch troops at his own disposal would amount to 60,000 men, and that the Prussian army would be raised to the same strength, while a force of Austrians and Bavarians which was assembling in the Upper Rhine would fall but little short of 150,000 men more. The statement which he had received from Clarke of the numbers of the French army he considered somewhat beneath the truth; and he estimated them himself at 255,000 men; of whom, after deducting the forces required for garrisons and those employed in La Vendée and other unquiet districts, 180,000 would remain available for operations against the allied armies. As this force would be less than that of the allies by one-third, Wellington conceived that the boldest plans might be adopted with perfect safety; and proposed therefore to invade France with the British and Prussian armies marching by the line of the Sambre on the 1st of May, while at that same time the Austrians and Bavarians should traverse the Duchy of Luxembourg, seize Sedan, and some of the other forts on the upper part of the Meuse, and cross that river in their neighbourhood.

He was forced, however, to abandon this plan, at least for the time, on finding that the Austrians were fully engaged in repelling an invasion of Lombardy on which Murat had ventured; that the Duc d'Angoulême had failed in the south; and that Napoleon had altered the time for the festival of the Champ de Mai to the 5th of May, and had adopted other measures to increase his army at an earlier period than Wellington had at first been led to think practicable. It seemed to him therefore to be probable that at the beginning of May the

numbers on each side would be nearly equal, while Napoleon's troops would be greatly superior in quality; so that he should be incurring needless risk if he were to provoke an encounter with them before the other allied armies were sufficiently advanced to combine their operations with his own.

He began, too, even at this early period of the war, to experience some of his old Peninsular difficulties. The Government of Hanover, a country which had been greatly exhausted by the exactions of the French during their occupation of it in the last war, was quite unable to maintain its legion, which formed a portion of his small army; and he expected that the British Government would refuse to bear the expense, as one which ought not to be thrown upon them; so that he was forced to contemplate the possibility of a large reduction in this force, with which, as having made a portion of his old Peninsular army, he was very unwilling to part. This difficulty was, however, at last removed, and pecuniary arrangements were made which enabled us to retain the services of that gallant body of men. But there were other perplexities less easy to encounter, and which threatened to be even more serious in their consequences. On the conclusion of peace in the preceding year large reductions had taken place in our establishments; and Wellington was now informed by Lord Mulgrave, the Master of the Ordnance, that instead of the 150 British guns which he had asked for, he must not expect more than 42. A further supply of 30 was indeed promised him from Hanover, so as to raise the number to 72; but that was less than half the amount which he had pronounced to be requisite, while, if put in comparison with the artillery of other armies, even the number for which he had originally asked was

excessively small; his demand having been regulated rather by his idea of the capability of our ordnance establishments at home than his own requirements in the field. And yet even this miserably scanty force which was promised him was likely to be rendered additionally inefficient by the want of drivers for the horses. He had received authority to purchase in the country horses for the trains of artillery and ammunition, but he had been unable to exercise it because he had no drivers to take care of them. Those who could be engaged in the country could not, he said, be depended on, and if the authorities in England did not send him out men for that "absolutely necessary service," which they professed themselves unable to do, "he saw "no other means of providing for it than taking soldiers "from the British infantry to perform it," who would only perform it very badly, and who could not be spared from their regiments.

Amid these manifold and vexatious causes of anxiety it was a welcome encouragement to him that many of his best Peninsular generals were obtaining commands in his army, and hastening to join him. Pack and Kempt and Clinton, men of coolness and skill as well as of daring courage, were coming; Cole, whose well-judged and timely advance had turned the tide of battle on the bloody field of Albuera; Picton, who had been the first to force his way over the fiery ramparts of Badajoz; and Hill, the hero of Arroyo de Molinos, the leader of the right wing of the army in its victorious march from Ciudad Rodrigo to Toulouse, who had won a place among the Peers of his native land by a combination of the highest military qualities surpassed by no one in that invincible host but its invincible leader. Lord Uxbridge, who, being senior to Wellington, as a Lieutenant-General, was unable to

serve under his command till he became a Field-Marshal, and who consequently had not as yet been his comrade, but whose gallantry and skill, repeatedly shown in Moore's campaign, were well known to him and to the army at large, was to command the cavalry; and in his hands there was no fear of the strength of that most important arm being spared or misapplied. Before the end of April, Prince Blucher also reached Liége to take the command of the Prussian army; and, though he was not possessed of any high degree of military skill, his indomitable energy, his influence over his troops, and the perfect freedom from all jealousy with which he co-operated with and deferred to his more able colleague made his arrival a very important addition to the allied armies.

It was well for the common cause that both commanders were of the same frank and open character; for a circumstance presently arose which might easily have bred ill-will if not open quarrels between them had either been of a jealous or intriguing disposition. A contingent of Saxon troops formed part of the army under Blucher's orders; but many of them felt a great attachment to Napoleon, to whose cause, even when ruined, their monarch had adhered with unswerving fidelity; they were also especially unfriendly to the Prussians, as those who had been most enriched by the territories of which their own king had been deprived at the Congress of Vienna. Under the influence of these feelings, and probably also of some solicitations from secret agents of Napoleon, at the beginning of May they broke into open mutiny, attacked Blucher's house, wounded some of his staff, and compelled the Prince himself to seek his safety by escaping by the back door.* They then renounced obedience to their officers, and marched off towards

* Muffling's 'Passages from my Life,' 209.

Brussels, pretending a desire that Wellington should take them under his command; but though 14,000 men would have made no unimportant addition to his force he unhesitatingly refused to have anything to do with mutineers, and recommended that the most guilty battalions should be disarmed, and sent back as prisoners to Prussia, while those less implicated might be distributed among the garrisons in Mayence and other towns, so as to remain under Blucher's command, though in a position in which they could no longer do or threaten mischief.

By the beginning of May, reports that the Imperial Guard had been advanced to Beauvais, and that Napoleon himself was expected on the frontier, led him to apprehend that an early offensive movement on the part of the enemy was in contemplation, and accordingly he took measures to concentrate his troops to resist it. He still expected the line of the French advance to be between the Scheldt and the Lys, or perhaps, but less probably, to the south of the Scheldt, between that river and the Sambre; and adhering to his favourable opinion of the plains in front of Waterloo as a good position for the defence of Brussels, he desired his army and the contingent furnished by the King of the Netherlands (which was also placed under his command, the King at the same time sending him a field-marshal's staff) to occupy the ground between Enghien and Nivelles; or, in the event of the advance of the enemy taking the more northerly direction between the Scheldt and the Lys, so as to threaten Ghent as well as Brussels, in that case his divisions were to be collected between Tournay, Courtray, and Oudenarde; and preparations were to be made to inundate the country around each fortress, and to carry the inundations even as far forward as Mons. He

was far from shrinking from the encounter which he was anticipating. By the 3rd of May, he reported that "he could now put 70,000 men into the field, and Blu- "cher 80,000, so that he hoped they would be able to "give a good account even of Buonaparte."

But the struggle was not to take place yet. Napoleon, though he was exerting himself with unparalleled vigour to collect an army sufficient to oppose all the forces which the allies could assemble against him, and though he already had ready for action a number equal to the combined armies of Blucher and Wellington, seemed unwilling to commence hostilities. On first resuming the throne he had written to each of the allied sovereigns, professing his desire for peace; and though not one of them vouchsafed a reply to a letter so palpably contradicted by his actions, he continued for some time to represent to his people,* perhaps in some degree to himself, that all prospect of accommodation was not yet desperate. Perhaps he thought that the decision of the Champ de Mai in his favour might have some weight with the Emperor of Austria, his father-in-law, or with Alexander, who had once been his warm friend, and who was well known to be offended with Louis; perhaps, too, he thought that the French people, many of whom he knew to be lukewarm if not unfriendly to his cause, might be stimulated to a more cordial support of it if they saw their country invaded by foreign armies; and on that account he may have preferred, if possible, to receive the first blow rather than to deliver it.

The votes given at the Champ de Mai in favour of Napoleon's re-establishment on the throne, and of the new constitution which he had granted, though far from numerous, were as unanimous as could be expected. His

* Chairas: 'Campagne de l'an 1815,' p. 17, 56.

army also was increasing at a rapid rate, so that by the end of the first week in May, Wellington had reason to believe that he had collected an efficient force of 200,000 men, and he therefore decided that Blucher and himself ought to be reinforced before they should attempt to move against him; yet whether he should be sufficiently reinforced he had still the greatest doubt. He had told the ministers repeatedly how weak, how ill equipped, how inadequate in every way to the task before it his army was, and yet on the 8th of May he complained that "they were doing nothing in England" to help him. They were not yet raising men nor calling out the militia, nor even taking the necessary steps in Parliament to raise money. "The war spirit was evaporating," while the leaders of the Opposition were not content with opposing the war itself, but were indemnifying themselves for their want of success on that point by attacking the General for his share in the proclamation issued by the negotiators at Vienna on hearing of Napoleon's departure from Elba, affirming that the declaration that Napoleon was deprived of the protection of the law,* and was delivered over to public vengeance, as they translated the words "*vindicte publique*," was an invitation to any desperado to assassinate him.

Wellington repelled the charge with extreme indignation. He complained, with reason, of the conduct of those who thus attacked him while he was absent on the public service, without venturing to bring forward a specific motion on the subject. And with respect to the proclamation itself, he declared that "no man breathing" believed it was intended to bear the construction" thus attempted to be fastened upon it. In fact, his assailants had shown themselves as weak in their French

* Hors de la loi.

as in their logic; and though Lord Grey and Sir Francis Burdett, who had chiefly distinguished themselves by the vehemence of their language, were practised rhetoricians, they gave the less eloquent warrior a triumph over them on this occasion, of which he skilfully availed himself, pointing out in the first place that the proper ordinary meaning of the French term employed was not "public vengeance," but "public justice;" and asking, with irresistible point, "even supposing that 'public "'vengeance' had been the correct translation, when "the dagger of the assassin had executed the vengeance "of the public?"

Again, that Napoleon's conduct had disentitled him to the protection of the law he still affirmed. In violation of "the only treaty by which he was connected with "the world, he had landed in France with such a force "as showed that he relied solely upon treachery and "rebellion, not only for success, but for safety. If in so "doing he was guilty of more than a mere breach of "treaty, of which there could be no doubt, he was clearly "guilty of the crime of rebellion and treason, with a view "to usurp the sovereign authority of France, a crime "which had always been deemed '*hors de la loi*' (to use "the language of the proclamation) so far as this, that "all sovereigns had in all times called upon their sub-"jects to raise their arms to protect them from him who "was guilty of it." The object of the proclamation, he said, had been to strengthen the hands of the King of France, since at the time that it was issued its promulgators did not expect Napoleon to be so easily re-established. And though on this point they had been decided, he declared that "he believed that there never "had been a public paper so successful, particularly in "France."

At the present day, even among the warmest admirers of the French emperor (and he still has many such, and among them men of no ordinary capacity and judgment), few will probably be found to deny that the proclamation thus assailed was a spirited and timely assertion of just and true principles; but in the year 1815 many of the Whig party were so dazzled and blinded by the brilliancy of Napoleon's genius and exploits, and partly also by their own liberal theories of government, which led them to prefer the cause of one whom they affirmed to have been chosen by the people for their sovereign, to that of one who had only the principles of hereditary right in his favour, that they were led into the very wildest extravagances in advocating his cause.

But however indignant at these unpatriotic and unjust attacks upon him, Wellington did not permit them to distract his attention for a moment from the necessary preparations for active operations. He was still of the same opinion as at first, that they ought to be commenced at the earliest possible moment, and that the object of them all ought to be the capture of Paris. In the prosecution of this object none of the allied armies would encounter either so great a force or such military difficulties as his own; so that he doubted whether he and Blucher could advance "till the move-"ments of some of the other armies had relieved them "from part of the enemy's force opposed to them." And with a view to such movements, he suggested a plan of operations to the other commanders of the allies, from which he anticipated speedy success in the event of its adoption. He himself was somewhat perplexed by the variety of contradictory reports which from time to time were brought to his head-quarters. At one moment a strong French force was said to be assembled at Valen-

ciennes, and it was positively affirmed that Napoleon himself had arrived in the neighbourhood of that town. A day or two later he was assured that the emperor was still at Paris; and other information led him to suspect that political difficulties not easily to be solved were likely to detain Napoleon for some time longer in his capital. At one moment intelligence was brought to him that the French were preparing to advance; at another that they were breaking up the roads and destroying the bridges behind their own frontier, as if preparing for a defensive campaign rather than for an invasion of Belgium. One thing which was certain was, that Soult had accepted the office of major-general to Napoleon, which Wellington considered a fact of considerable importance, since it not only gave the French emperor the aid of his great talents in organizing his army, but, in consequence of Soult's character for moderation and also for sagacity, it diffused a much greater confidence than existed before both in the fairness of Napoleon's views, and also in the stability of his power, and consequently encouraged many officers of great value to offer him their services who at first had stood aloof from his cause.

But while Wellington was preparing with as much energy and judgment as he ever displayed for an early and effective opening of the campaign, some of the French Royalists thought him too slow. The Duc de Berri wrote him a letter, so illegible that it took him a day to decipher, urging his immediate advance; and the Comte de Blacas, who had been Louis' prime minister, pressed the same step on him with great earnestness, arguing that it would favour an insurrection against the power of the usurper for which the people were ripe in many departments. Wellington, who was always ready

to give his reasons for his conduct, replied that he had reason to believe that the numbers of the enemy's force on the frontier were superior to his own, and that nothing could possibly produce so injurious an effect to the cause of Louis as a check, however temporary, sustained by any of the allied armies, and more especially by his own, from the importance of its present position; and, with respect to the assistance which it was imagined that a forward movement on his part might give to the spirit of insurrection, he pointed out that, while the departments supposed to cherish such a spirit were occupied by the imperial armies, it was impossible for the people to venture to speak out; that to encourage them to do so was only to lure them to destruction; but that when his own force had become sufficiently numerous to clear those districts of the enemy, then, and not till then, would the people be able to speak and to act in safety. The Royalists then, in his judgment, were bound to wait with patience, certain that it would be rewarded with eventual triumph. By the beginning of June it was seen that the prospect of active operations drew very near. Blucher's army now amounted to nearly 85,000 men, and he was very eager to advance; but Wellington, though his army, which by this time was raised to about 80,000 men of different nations, was not likely to receive any further reinforcements of importance, decided on a little longer delay: he was aware by this time that the Austrians had defeated Murat so completely as no longer to be under any apprehensions of danger from the side of Italy; but he still objected to move till it should be known when Schwartzenberg would be able to commence operations on the Rhine. The protraction however of the army's inactivity caused him no respite from his own toils. Many of the negotiations with

foreign powers respecting the subsidies which they were anxious to obtain from Britain were committed to him, and many of the treaties concluded with them were his work. And he was also, against his will, made the confidant of the groundless discontents of many who thought themselves aggrieved; and of the unreasonable wishes of others who overrated the services which they had rendered or professed to be able to render. And his rule of replying to every letter which he received entailed on him an amount of correspondence which it is almost inconceivable how he ever got through.

Among his correspondents was the Duke of Orleans, who even before Napoleon's return, having begun to intrigue against the throne of his kinsman, had probably some hope that the course of events might yet give him a chance on the defeat of the usurper of obtaining the crown, and who now complained to the British General of portions of Louis' conduct; justifying himself for having hitherto kept aloof from his court at Ghent, and indicating an intention of appearing to disconnect his interests from those of the elder branch of his family. Wellington, with great tact, forbore in his reply to blame the conduct which the Duke had hitherto pursued, while at the same time he vindicated the King from the charges thus brought against him, and put the Duke's proper course for the future before his eyes plainly by the suggestion that "if, as might be expected, "the entrance and first successes of the allies in France "should induce a great party to appear in favour of the "King in different parts of the kingdom, surely his "Highness would then consider it his duty to come "forward in his Majesty's service." And that such a demonstration on behalf of Louis would be the result of

any success on his part he had no doubt; since, in his opinion, the King "had been driven from his throne by "the army alone: and though a great portion of the "population of France had regarded his expulsion with "apparent indifference," they did not in general "like the "existing order of things," and many of them "would, if "they dared, oppose it in arms."

CHAPTER XXXII.

Napoleon joins his army—He attacks the Prussian outposts—The Duchess of Richmond's ball—The Prussians are driven back at Ligny—The French are repulsed at Quatre Bras—Retreat of the Prussians at Wavre: and of the British at Waterloo.

AT last the inaction of the armies was put an end to, not by the advance of the allies, but by that of the enemy. On the 12th of June, Napoleon quitted Paris to join his army; his last words, as he stepped into his carriage, evincing his opinion which of his antagonists was the most formidable, and at the same time the reliance which he still placed on his own fortune in the struggle to which he was hastening. "I go," said he, "to measure "myself with Wellington." On the 14th of June, he arrived at Avesnes, a strong fortress not quite twenty miles from the frontier, in the neighbourhood of which his different divisions had already been concentrated; and issued an address to his soldiers, reminding them that that day was the anniversary of the victories of Marengo and of Friedland, which had each in their turn decided the fate of Europe; and exhorting them to prove themselves the same men that they had been on those days of triumph, and on others when they had beaten thrice and even six times their own number of Prussians, who stood now in the van of their enemies. There was

some little exaggeration even in this disparagement of the Prussians: of the British there were no defeats to which even he, with all his audacious contempt for truth, could point as an encouragement; but against them he strove to stimulate a spirit of revenge, by calling to the remembrance of those who had been their prisoners, what bitter miseries they had suffered in the English hulks. The more important of the allied powers were, he said, blinded by their short-lived prosperity; the lesser states were dragged reluctantly in their train. The object of their hostility was the independence and the most sacred rights of France; but they should find the humiliation of the French people an enterprise beyond their power to achieve. Forced marches, battles, and dangers it was true lay before his army; but with constancy on their part, victory was certain, and with victory the re-establishment of the rights, of the honour, and of the happiness of their country. At all events, the moment was come for every Frenchman who had a heart to conquer or "to die."

The army to which this exhortation was addressed was one in which it was not unnatural for its commander to feel the confidence which he thus expressed. It is true that in numbers it fell short of the united force of the two armies which it was about to attack by not less than 30,000 men,* but it was composed wholly of men of one nation, most of them veterans of long experience and tried valour. And its central situation, which enabled its chief to choose its point of attack, and the time for commencing it, gave it an advantage which in such able hands as those of Napoleon was of itself almost sufficient

* The exact numbers of the French are not known, but they were probably rather above 125,000 men; the Prussian force on the 15th of June was 84,617 men; and the British force available for the battles of the 16th and 18th was 71,186.

to counterbalance that inferiority. Its equipments and artillery were singularly complete, the latter numbering not less than 350 guns. It was in the afternoon of the 13th that Wellington first received positive intelligence of the concentration of this splendid army, and of the certainty of its immediate advance; but, as it was not yet possible to ascertain the intended direction of that advance, which, as some of the enemy's movements appeared to indicate, was as likely to take the line of Valenciennes and Lille as that of Charleroi and Namur, he made no alteration in the disposition of his forces. The occupation of Ghent by Louis XVIII. made him think it probable that Napoleon might deem the occupation of that city, from the moral impression which it would make on the French, as desirable as the seizure of Brussels; he therefore considered it of the greatest importance to protect them both: it was obvious that an advance of the French to Lille would threaten both these cities equally, and a premature movement of the allied force towards Charleroi would have completely uncovered the road towards Lille. As it was impossible to deprive the French of the initiative, and of the choice of their line of operations, he had a difficult task, and at best but a choice of evils before him; but he considered the mischief which would arise from a slight loss of time to be trifling compared with that which might be the consequence of making a premature and false movement in the presence of Napoleon. There was this great difference between the antagonists thus opposed to one another, that while each was equally confident in his own powers and in the result of his actions, Wellington's confidence never prevented him from doing full justice to the merits of those opposed to him, while Napoleon seemed to think that an indispensable part of that self-

reliance which is inherent in the character of every great man was a contempt for, and a disparagement of his antagonists. And this habit led him more than once to rashness and disaster, while Wellington's wiser candour was to him the natural parent of caution and of safety. As had been his wont in the Peninsula, Wellington had divided his army into three corps; one, as before, was given to Hill; the second was placed under the Prince of Orange; the third he retained under his own more immediate orders; and their different cantonments reached from Audenarde on the Scheldt, the well-known scene of Marlborough's victory over Vendôme, to Nivelles, and to the road leading from Brussels to Charleroi, on which, at a small hamlet occupying a point where it is intersected by that leading from Lille to Namur, and named from the diverging branches les Quatre Bras, lay the advanced posts of the Prince of Orange; keeping up the communication with the Prussian army, the right wing of which was at Charleroi. The position thus covered every possible line by which the enemy could advance, and yet, widely extended as it was, so perfect was the communication between the different divisions and the headquarters which were established at Brussels, that Wellington reckoned that his orders could at any time be conveyed to every part of the army in six hours, and that the bulk of it could be concentrated at any point of the line in less than four and twenty.

At three o'clock on the 15th, the Prince of Orange came to Brussels to dine with Wellington, and brought him the first certain intelligence of Napoleon's movements. At daybreak that morning the French had attacked the advanced posts of the Prussians at Thuin, a village about half-way between the frontier and Charleroi, and had driven them back upon the latter town.

It seemed probable that the object which Napoleon had in view was to force his way between the British and Prussian armies, so as to cut off their means of communicating with and supporting one another, and to enable him to attack each separately with the bulk of his army. Wellington might well have expressed displeasure at the want of energy in his subordinates, which had allowed information of such vast importance to be so many hours in reaching him; but he did not waste a moment in unavailing reproaches, and at once set himself to repair the lost time, without an instant's delay issuing his orders to the different divisions of the army; some he directed at once to march towards Nivelles and Quatre Bras; and others to keep themselves ready to move at a moment's notice. Later in the evening a messenger came from Blucher, with the news that Napoleon was continuing his advance, that he had occupied Charleroi, and had driven back General Zeten towards Fleurus; and on the receipt of this information, Wellington despatched a further set of orders to some of those divisions which he had not previously put in motion, calculated to collect them also on the line of the French advance, which, as far as his army was to be the object of attack, it was now plain would be by the road from Charleroi to Brussels.

The news of the approach of the enemy could not be kept secret from the citizens of Brussels; many, it was well known, would hail it with joy, many would regard it with terror and dismay; and Wellington felt it to be an object of the greatest consequence to check the exultation of the one and to tranquillize the apprehensions of the others. Brussels was full of English visitors, who had been travelling in different parts of the

Continent when Napoleon recovered his power, and who had halted in that capital on their way to England. And on this night the Duchess of Richmond gave a ball, which the events of the next three days have caused to be more widely celebrated than any entertainment ever given since Belshazzar poured libations to his gods in the sacred vessels of the altar of Jerusalem, or Thais lighted Alexander on his way to overwhelm the towers of Babylon in the flames of a second and more fatal conflagration. Historians and moralists, novelists and poets have vied with one another in describing the brilliant scene and "sound of revelry" that filled the halls of the duchess; and in contrasting it with the stern struggle for life and death that before the next night laid many of the dancers in the dust, furrowed many a fair cheek with tears, and crushed many a heart, on this evening light and unsuspicious of danger, with desolation and misery. But amid that joyful throng there were many whose bosoms were already full of grave thoughts and anxious though fearless anticipations of the morrow. For Wellington and his staff were present, and a number of officers who had received his directions to show themselves at the ball and then to depart quietly to join their regiments, which long before daybreak were in full march towards their intended point of concentration; and Wellington himself remained longer, with unembarrassed countenance and cheerful voice, taking his full share in the festivity; so that those Belgians who formed part of the company could surely have augured nothing but security from his appearance and demeanour.

It was not till past midnight that, after returning thanks at supper for the health of the British army, which had been joyfully drunk by the assembled guests, he quitted the entertainment; and only three or four

short hours had been given to necessary rest, when he was riding fast to Quatre Bras, to give battle to the most formidable foe that he or any other general ever encountered. Many a gallant regiment, hurrying to the same point, did he pass on his way, replying to their cheers by a friendly nod and smile, and often by a word of kind recognition and encouragement as the features of any of his Peninsular veterans met his eye, and he felt that some at least of those around him were men on whose often-tried valour he could rely in the greatest extremity of danger. It was almost eleven o'clock on the 16th that he reached Quatre Bras, where he found that his own outposts also had been engaged, as the French on the preceding evening had attacked a brigade of the army of the Netherlands posted at Frasne, a village two or three miles in front of Quatre Bras, and had driven it back on that point; but the brigade had been reinforced early in the morning, and had recovered its lost ground before his arrival.

As there appeared no symptom of any further advance being made immediately by the enemy, and as he received information also that Blucher was collecting his army at Ligny, a village in front of the Namur road, and six or seven miles to the left of Quatre Bras, he decided on riding across to the Prussian marshal, to concert his operations with him in a personal interview. He found him expecting an immediate attack, and very desirous of being supported by a division of the British army. A glance at the position which Blucher had taken up was sufficient to show his more skilful colleague that it was full of danger, but when he pointed out its defects, the Prince contented himself with justifying it by a reference to the habits of his own troops; and Wellington forbore to urge his objections with useless pertinacity: he saw,

however, plainly that before evening the Prussians would require all the aid which he could give them, and though he without hesitation pronounced against the proposal to divide his army, he promised to bring the whole of it to their support provided he were not attacked himself.*

When, however, he returned to the division which he had left at Quatre Bras, he found that such a movement was beyond his power. Napoleon had been joined the night before by Ney, and had decided on following the Prussians with the bulk of his army, while Ney with a strong division should occupy Wellington's attention. So long and rapid, however, had been the marches which the French had made on the preceding day that neither the emperor nor his lieutenant were able to commence the attack till two o'clock. At about that hour Napoleon assaulted Blucher's position at Ligny, and, after a most obstinate conflict, in which the Prussians behaved with the greatest intrepidity, and Blucher redeemed the want of skill which his disposition of his troops had evinced by the most heroic personal gallantry, exposing himself to the most imminent personal danger, and struggling bravely to the last, they were defeated with a loss of men bearing no very striking disproportion to that which they inflicted on their assailants; but they lost also upwards of twenty guns, and the possession of the field of battle, from which, however, they retired in good order, without suffering any molestation of importance at the hands of their conquerors.

It was at about the same hour that Ney, with nearly 18,000 men, of whom about 2,000 were splendid cavalry, attacked the advanced brigade of Wellington's army, consisting of Dutch and Belgian troops under the

* Muffling, p. 237.

Prince of Orange, and amounting to less than two-fifths of his numbers, without any cavalry at all, and furnished with less than half the number of guns which were employed against them. They behaved well, but even better troops than they must have given ground before the overpowering numbers of their assailants. And they had already lost several prisoners, and the Prince was beginning to apprehend the loss of the whole of his position, when a little before three Wellington returned to the scene of action, and almost at the same moment Picton arrived with a strong division of British and Hanoverian troops which at once began to change the aspect of affairs: presently the Duke of Brunswick also came on the ground with his troops, which gave Wellington a slight superiority in everything but artillery, in which at every period during the day he was inferior to his antagonist. The struggle now became severe, for the resolution which the Dutch troops had at first displayed was exhausted, and they began to fall into great disorder. As usual, Wellington spared not his own personal exertions, being present in every part of the field and on every occasion where or when the prospects of the day bore the most critical appearance, or the troops seemed most to stand in need of the encouraging and guiding eye of their commander. The Duke of Brunswick was slain gallantly heading a charge of his lancers; and his men, who could not always hold their ground against the impetuous onset of the French light cavalry, on one occasion very nearly entangled Wellington himself in their rout in a manner that might have proved fatal to the whole campaign. He was not far in their rear when they broke and fled before a charge of the French lancers, bearing him along with them till he arrived at a ditch on one side of the Namur road, within

which the 92nd Highlanders were crouching, waiting for orders to take an effective part in the conflict. Their bayonets bristled above the brink, and seemed to bar his charger's passage, when he shouted to them to lie down, and leapt over them, safe at last behind the impenetrable fence of their disciplined courage. Nor was this the only time on that eventful day that they proved his defence; for once again some of the French cavalry found their way among them, and were pushing on their intrepid course to within a few yards of the spot where he was standing, when the steady fire of the Highlanders arrested the assailants, and brought their leading files to the ground almost at his feet.

It was not long before the disorder of the Dutch battalions was changed into headlong flight; but though their disappearance from the field uncovered several of the British regiments, the struggle was maintained on both sides with desperate valour. More British troops came up, which still kept Wellington's force nearly on a level in point of numbers with the enemy, though they also received at the same time a reinforcement of splendid cavalry, to which Wellington had nothing to oppose. Prodigies of valour were performed by individuals and regiments of the allied force. On one occasion the British 44th when taken in the rear by a regiment of French lancers faced round, and meeting them in single line, repulsed them by their deadly fire: later in the day, Picton, seeing that that regiment and the 42nd were attacked by such overwhelming numbers of cavalry that it seemed doubtful whether even their unflinching steadiness would be able to preserve them from being broken, and that the Dutch and Brunswick horse were incapable of making any further effort, while the British cavalry had not yet come up, conceived the resolution of

supplying their place with his own division of infantry. The manœuvre was no sooner determined on than executed: for the first time in the history of war, foot soldiers advanced against horsemen; sometimes they charged them in column; sometimes they formed into square to resist the onset of the lancers and cuirassiers who swarmed around them; but ever they pressed on, and driving back the amazed squadrons, effectually relieved their comrades, though the retreat of the cavalry only exposed them the more to the ceaseless fire of the heavy French batteries to which Wellington had as yet no adequate force to oppose.

On other parts of the field the French had better success: a blunder of the Prince of Orange, who deployed two regiments into line just as a brigade of cuirassiers, concealed from their view by the great height of the rye through which they were advancing, was about to fall upon them, caused them terrible loss, and the capture of one of their colours; but by this time some fresh British divisions had come up, and some batteries of artillery, which placed Wellington more on a footing of equality with his antagonist in this respect. He had once before assumed the offensive, attacking the French in a thicket called the Wood of Bossu, a little in advance of his right; and he now again began to move his troops forward at all points; driving the enemy from a farm called Germioncourt, in front of his centre; till Ney, finding that a division under D'Erlon, in numbers almost equal to that which he had hitherto employed in the battle, and on the support of which he had confidently reckoned, had been withdrawn from him by Napoleon, with a view to strengthen the attack which he himself was preparing to make upon the Prussian centre, abandoned the contest, and withdrew his troops to the heights

of Frasne. The number of killed and wounded on both sides had been extremely heavy, and nearly equal, each army being weakened by the loss of about 4,000 men; but the result of the day was greatly in favour of Wellington, since the repulse of Ney had rendered it impossible for Napoleon any longer to attempt to separate him from Blucher; and, moreover, he had now gained time for the whole of his divisions to join him, so that the next morning would see his entire army united at Quatre Bras in force sufficient to destroy Ney, unless Napoleon should abandon his designs upon the Prussians, and bring his army to the support of his lieutenant.

Wellington's first anxiety was to ascertain the exact result of the battle which the Prussians had been maintaining against Napoleon: the two fields of battle were so near to one another that he had been able by means of his telescope to discern many of Napoleon's and Blucher's operations; and he had seen enough to feel sure that his anticipations of defeat to the Prussians had been fulfilled, though he had no means of judging how far it had affected their power of continuing operations with him in future. The moment that the battle of Ligny was over, one of Blucher's aides-de-camp had been despatched to him with the intelligence of its result, and of the necessity under which the Prussian marshal felt himself of retiring; but the officer charged with this message had fallen in with some of the French outposts, and had been severely wounded; so that it was not till the next morning that Wellington heard that the whole Prussian army had retreated upon Wavre. Such a movement on their part rendered it impossible for him to remain at Quatre Bras; and he at once resolved to fall back to the very ground which, in the preceding autumn, he had mentioned to the ministers as

one of the most favourable positions for an army compelled to fight a battle for the defence of Brussels. At that time he had had the whole field of Waterloo carefully surveyed by our engineers, and a sketch had been made of it by his direction with such careful accuracy, that when on the morning of the 17th it was brought to him from Brussels, he was able to mark down on it the positions which he desired the army to take up; so that every regiment marched at once to the ground which it was destined to occupy on the fight of the morrow.* He sent news of his intended movement to Blucher, with the addition that he proposed to offer battle to Napoleon the next day, provided the Prince could come to his assistance with one division of his army.† Blucher, wishing to give his troops more time to recover from their late defeat, requested him to postpone the battle till the 19th; but he replied that that would not be in his power, as it was beyond a doubt that Napoleon would attack him on the 18th. And on receiving this second message, the resolute old Prince promised to join him, not with one or two divisions only, but with his whole force.

On the 17th Wellington himself was on horseback at dawn, reconnoitring the enemy and the country around in every direction; to his men, fatigued with their rapid march and hard conflict of the preceding day, he allowed a few hours more of protracted rest, which also gave them time to cook their food; and about ten o'clock he began his retreat: but it was no very easy task to conduct such an operation without loss; for the road was

* By the kindness of my gallant relative, Lieut.-Gen. Oldfield, R.E., and of Lady Carmichael Smyth, I am enabled to present to the reader a fac-simile of this sketch, which is still in existence, with the Duke's pencil-marks clearly visible upon it.

† Malcolm's Life, ii., 102, and Muffling.

narrow and heavy; at one point the village of Genappe, consisting of one long narrow street, and approached by a narrow bridge over the Dyle, formed a defile very unsuited to the passage of a numerous army, while it was certain that the steps of the retreating battalions would be pressed by the enemy, whose superiority in artillery and cavalry gave him very formidable means of annoyance. It was important therefore to conceal the movement from the French as long as possible; and in order to mask it, the light troops were left for some time in their advanced position; while the heavier divisions, with the Dutch and Brunswick regiments retired, and in spite of the delay caused by the narrowness of Genappe and its bridge, the whole force reached that village in good order, without having been exposed to the slightest molestation.

In fact, it was no part of Ney's plan to attack the British army again, so as perhaps to drive it from Quatre Bras; but rather by apparent inactivity to lure it to remain in that position till both the emperor and himself could fall upon it, while the Prussians should by their retreat be so far removed from it as to be unable to afford it any support. It argued a strange ignorance of Wellington's former campaigns to conceive such an expectation for a moment. But the marshal had scarcely ascertained that it was disappointed, and that the British army had retired, when Napoleon himself arrived: he had left Marshal Grouchy with 33,000 men to pursue the Prussians, and now brought the rest of his army to join Ney, and bring Wellington to action with their combined forces. Napoleon at once ordered a vigorous pursuit, and sent forward his cavalry, which came up with the British rear-guard just as it got clear of Genappe; and a smart skirmish ensued between some

strong squadrons of French lancers and cuirassiers and some of our cavalry regiments. The brunt of it fell on the 7th Hussars, which were commanded with great skill by Major Hodge, and which, having their natural valour additionally excited by the consideration that they were fighting under the eye of their Colonel, Lord Uxbridge, displayed the most dauntless gallantry; but their sabres proved an unequal match for the lance, and they sustained severe loss, Hodge himself being slain at their head; when Lord Uxbridge relieved them, and sent the Life Guards against the Lancers, who were beginning to raise a shout of exultation at their success, but who were now broken in every direction, and trampled under foot beneath the great bulk and overpowering impetuosity of the household troops. Finding themselves unable to cope with our heavy cavalry, the French now had recourse to manœuvres; but in these also they proved decidedly inferior to our regiments, who continued their retreat, retiring by alternate columns, and covered by their skirmishers, without ever giving their pursuers the slightest chance of inflicting a blow upon them. Meanwhile, the artillery on each side had not been idle, but ours had been by far the most effective, and the fire from the opposing batteries did not entirely cease till the British army had reached Mont St. Jean, and had begun to take up the position allotted to it for the night.

The result of this day must have been very mortifying to Napoleon. Even in the Peninsula, while the incomparable qualities of our infantry gradually extorted from all an admission of their pre-eminence, it had been the fashion to assign the palm to the French cavalry; but on this occasion, though superior in numbers, they had proved inferior to the British horsemen, not only in the downright charge, but in the facility of their movements

and the readiness and precision of their manœuvres; and Wellington had withdrawn his entire army from one position to another seven or eight miles in its rear with a loss not exceeding eighty men, which was considerably less than that which had been sustained by his pursuers. Those* most competent to judge of such an exploit have pronounced the retreat "a perfect model for operations "of this nature;" and have affirmed that the whole of his dispositions by which it was secured "evince "altogether a degree of skill which has never been "surpassed." So confident did he himself feel of their success, that in the morning, after having issued his orders, while the troops were beginning to execute them, he lay down on the ground, covered his face with a newspaper, which, with some despatches, he had just received from England, and fell fast asleep.

It was about half-past six in the evening when the British troops reached the ridges in front of Waterloo, which their chief had selected as the ground of the coming battle, and it was but little later when the French also came to a halt about a mile in their rear. It seemed as though bitter feelings of unusual personal animosity inflamed each individual of the two armies; since, though the posting of sentries and pickets is a step commonly allowed to be carried out without annoyance, on this occasion it led to a dropping fire of musketry at many parts of the line, and to several skirmishes, in which the French were for the most part the aggressors, but the result of which gave them no reason to triumph in their departure from the ordinary courtesies of war. At last, however, the efforts of the superior officers on each side restored order, and both armies prepared to bivouac in sight of one another through as cheerless a night as ever

* See especially Siborne, i. 277.

gave augury of the woe that was about to be so widely spread by the event of the morrow. There had been many long-continued showers and some storms of exceeding violence during the day; and the sun had hardly set when the rain fell with great steadiness and heaviness, which extinguished the bivouac fires, and buried the whole field in darkness, only broken from time to time by flashes of lightning, which increased the threatening and ill-omened appearance of the universal gloom. It was in rain-soaked liquid mud, or in still more thoroughly saturated fields of lofty rye that the two armies lay down to snatch what rest their fatigues might have secured to them, overpowering even the anxiety which must have agitated the minds of all but the most insensible.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Description of the British position—Wellington reinforces the division at Hal—Napoleon's confidence—The Battle of Waterloo—Feelings of Wellington.

WELLINGTON himself passed the night at the village of Waterloo, and by three in the morning of the 18th he was again on the alert, making his last arrangements to receive the attack of the French, which he foresaw would not be long delayed. The ground which he had selected as his field of battle was a low ridge about two miles long, slightly drawn back in the centre, at its right end descending abruptly into the valley in front of a small hamlet called Braine Merbes, and at its left extremity turning almost at right angles towards the enemy, where it derived a little strength from a hamlet called Smohain, a country house called Frischemont, and two farm-houses known as La Haie and Papelotte. About three hundred yards in front of its centre was another farm-house, called La Haie Sainte, and rather more advanced in front of its right extremity was a country house called Hougoumont, having a farm-house attached to it, with court-yards surrounded by lofty walls, and a large garden, also walled on two sides and protected on the others by a thick hedge, while in front of it was a tolerably thick orchard and plantation covering several acres. The road from Nivelles to Brussels

crossed the British line just within its right extremity, and that from Charleroi to the same capital cuts it, as well as the line occupied by the French, nearly in the centre, passing by the farm of La Haie Sainte. Along the crest of the ridge runs the road from Wavre to Braine la Leud, which, though not paved, was in good condition, and greatly facilitated the movements of the troops, and especially of the artillery during the battle.

Wellington thought it highly probable that, instead of assailing the front of his position, Napoleon would endeavour to turn it by the road which leads from Mons to Brussels, passing about five miles beyond Braine la Leud; and to prevent the success of any such attempt, having previously left Prince Frederick of Orange at Hal with a brigade of Dutch troops, he now reinforced him further with 7,000 British soldiers under Sir Charles Colville. And even after the attack on his front was so pronounced as to leave no room for apprehending any such attempt, he forbore to call them to his aid on the field of battle, because, in the event of the Prussians, whose exact line of advance to his support he could not foresee, cutting off the retreat of the French in the direction of Charleroi, a force in that position might prove of essential use in impeding any movements that they might attempt to make towards the north. His own retreat, should such a step become necessary, he had provided for by constructing a bridge of boats across the Rupel* at Boom, and by taking care that the flying bridge across the Scheldt opposite Antwerp should be kept in perfect order.

He also wrote at the same time to the Duc de Berri,

* The Rupel is the name given to the Dyle after its junction with the Nethe; though in many maps the name of the Dyle is preserved till the river falls into the Scheldt, which it does opposite Rupelmonde.

who had a small force of Louis's old body-guard under his command in front of Ghent, to recommend him, in the event of his receiving, "not false rumours, but certain intelligence" of Napoleon's having succeeded in turning the British position at Hal and reaching Brussels, to fall back upon Antwerp, and to convey to King Louis his earnest request that he also would retire by the left bank of the Scheldt from Ghent to Antwerp. At the same time he assured his Royal Highness that this recommendation proceeded from no real apprehension of the event of the impending conflict. "He hoped," he said, "and what was more, he had every "reason to believe, that all would turn out well; but it "was necessary to provide for everything, and unwise to "run the risk of great disaster." In the same spirit also he sent orders to the governor of Antwerp to consider Antwerp in a state of siege; but, nevertheless, to receive within its walls Louis and his retinue if he should arrive there, and also any families, whether of the British or of any other nation, who might be driven to quit Brussels and to repair thither for shelter. He desired him also to take steps to be able to inundate the country around the city the moment that it should become necessary.

Having despatched these letters, he mounted his horse and visited every part of his line, making such alterations in, or modifications of the previous position of each brigade and regiment as a renewed examination of the ground and of the position of the enemy suggested. The march of the different divisions in their retreat of the preceding day had been so arranged that each had arrived almost at the precise spot which it was intended that it should occupy in the fight; but still there were some things of great importance yet to be done. Four hundred men of the German Legion had been

placed in La Haie Sainte, the farm-buildings of which, with a low wall which partly separated them from the high-road, formed a large square, and which, like Hougoumont, was covered in some degree by a thickly-planted orchard, which lay between it and the French lines. The garrison was now busily employed in loopholing the walls for musketry, erecting barricades across the road, and making the most of every means of defence which the place afforded. Hougoumont, as covering the right flank of the position, was of still greater importance, and it was occupied by the light companies of the Guards, whose main body was stationed just behind it; and before daybreak every available hand was employed in loopholing every part of the buildings which seemed accessible to assaults. Carpenters from the different regiments were constructing platforms sufficiently near the top of the walls to enable men to fire over them down upon the heads of their assailants; the gates were strengthened, and every possible expedient was taken to enable its defenders to hold it against the most resolute attack.

Without reckoning the division at Hal, which took no part in the battle, Wellington had now under his command something under 68,000 men, but of these not 24,000 were British troops, and above 16,000 were Dutch and Belgians, who, as Wellington had already experienced, could not be relied on, though he could hardly foresee the extent to which their cowardice, and probably in some degree their preference for the cause of Napoleon, would render them worse than useless. The contingents too of Nassau and of Brunswick were comparatively raw troops; and the only soldiers besides the British on whom it was at all safe to place much reliance were the old German Legion, numbering, in cavalry and

SKETCH of the BATTLE OF WATERLOO,

Fought on the 18th June 1815 between the Allied Army under the Command of His Grace the Duke of WELLINGTON and that of the French led by NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

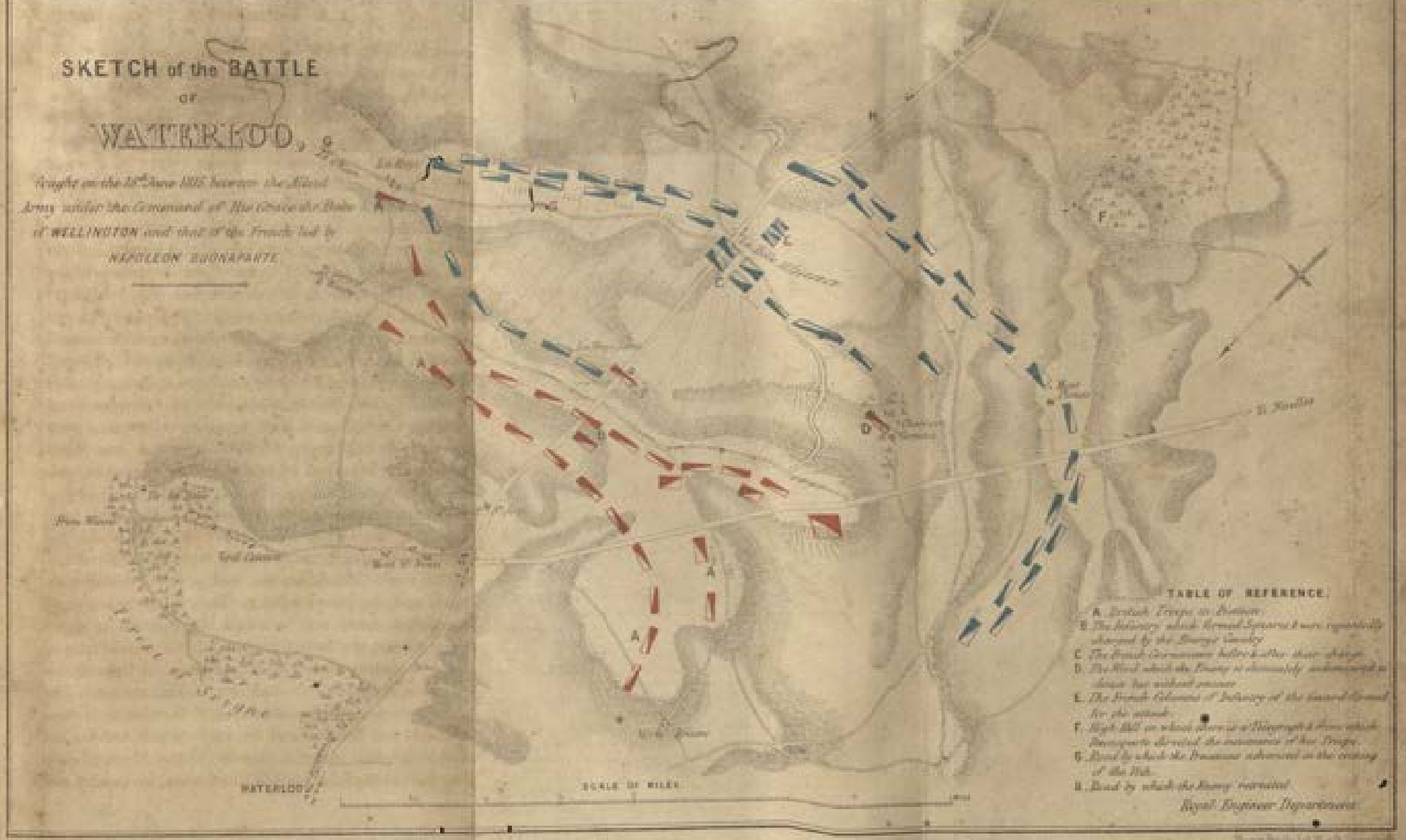
TABLE OF REFERENCE.
A. British Troops in Position.
B. The Infantry which formed Squares & were repeatedly charged by the Enemy Cavalry
C. The French Cannonade before & after their Attack.
D. The Wood which the Enemy so unsuccessfully endeavoured to obtain but without success
E. The French Columns of Infantry of the Imperial Guard for the attack.
F. High Hill on whose Crest is a Telegraph & from which Buonaparte directed the movements of his Troops.
G. Road by which the Prussians advanced in the evening of the 18th.
H. Road by which the Enemy retreated.
Royal Engineer Department.
SCALE OF MILES
WATERLOO
La Haye Sainte
Hougoumont
Papelotte
La Haye
Frischermont
Ohain
Genappe
Quatre Bras
Nivelles

infantry, rather more than 5,000 men, and a body of nearly 11,000 Hanoverians, only a portion of whom, however, were good troops. His cavalry amounted to rather more than 12,000, of whom above 3,000 were Dutch and Belgians, and he had 156 guns.

Behind Hougoumont, at the point where the ridge of hills descends into the plain, the British line made an elbow towards Braine Merbes, so as to face Braine la Leud, and thus to confront an enemy who should come outside of Hougoumont against our flank. In order as far as possible to insure the steadiness of the Belgians, they were scattered among the other brigades, care being also taken to place them where there would probably be the least occasion to make too heavy demands on their loyalty or valour. The infantry formed the first line, the cavalry the second. The extreme right was held by a part of Hill's division, consisting of some Hanoverian regiments, some of the German Legion, and our own light brigade under General Adam. Picton's division occupied the left, stretching from behind La Haie Sainte to the heights in the rear of Papelotte and La Haie, and the rest of the army filled up the ground between them in close order, having their artillery ranged along the whole front of the position. The enclosures of Papelotte, La Haie, and the hamlet of Smohain were occupied by some Nassau battalions, under the command of Prince Bernard of Saxe Weimar. Behind the infantry were the cavalry, Sir Colquhoun Grant, with the 7th and 15th Hussars, and a regiment of the German Legion being on the Nivelles road, Sir John Vandeleur and Sir Hussey Vivian on the left, with more of the light cavalry, while the heavy cavalry, consisting of the Household troops and 1st Dragoon Guards, under Lord Edward Somerset, and of Sir W. Ponsonby's brigade, known sometimes as

the Union Brigade, as being composed of an English, a Scotch, and an Irish regiment, the Royals, the Greys, and Enniskillens, occupied the centre. The Brunswickers, the Dutch-Belgian cavalry, and Sir John Lambert's brigade of Cole's division, which had only reached the field that morning by a forced march from Ghent, formed the principal part of the reserve.

Between the British and the French lines rose one or two gentle slopes, but in general the ground was level and unenclosed, being chiefly arable land, covered over a great portion of its space by fields of very lofty rye, which in some instances concealed the advance of the French from our men till they were close upon them, and thus caused us considerable loss. The hills occupied by the French were nearly parallel to our own, trending however a little towards them on the extreme right behind La Haie. Where the Charleroi road passes over them stood a small public-house, called La Belle Alliance, but there were no buildings or enclosures of any kind at any other part of the line, which, indeed, as they were to be the assailants, would have been no protection to them, but rather an obstacle to their advance.

Napoleon had passed the night at Rossomme, a hamlet at a short distance behind La Belle Alliance, and he too rose early and repaired to the front of his troops. He had felt uncertain whether Wellington designed to continue his retreat, and his delight was extreme when he saw the allied army in its position manifestly resolved to try the fortune of a battle. "At last," said he, "at "last I have them, these English;" they were the last words of boastfulness and confidence that ever passed the lips to which a long series of unparalleled triumphs had made confidence natural, and boasting itself scarcely ungraceful. There were those among his lieutenants who

gazed on the hostile array with less satisfaction. "Sire," said Soult, "I know these English: they will die ere "they quit the ground on which they stand." "Bah!" replied the Emperor; "you think, because he defeated "you, that Wellington is a great general." Foy, who had been by Soult's side in every combat from Saurorен to Toulouse, came to the support of his old comrade. "Ah, sire, the English infantry are the devil in the "fight." Napoleon smiled disdainfully, and made no reply.

And yet the prospect before him, not only formidable but also novel as it was to his eyes, was well calculated to awaken doubts in the breast of the most sanguine adversary. On the white uniforms of Austria, on the more darkly-clad ranks of Prussia and of Russia, he had often gazed both before and after battle with all the confidence or satisfaction of a conqueror; but on this day, for the first time, the scarlet uniform of the British army met his view; and its wearers were not now divided against one another, as on the ancient and glorious days of Bannockburn or Flodden, or more recently and more sadly on the Boyne, or at Culloden; but standing shoulder to shoulder, united in heart and hand to meet a foreign foe whom they had never encountered ingloriously. For there were the 1st or Royal Dragoons, originally raised by that great commander who a century before had proved as invincible as Wellington—Marlborough's regiment, whose standards had already waved over almost every field of victory from Busaco to Toulouse; there were the Scotch Grays, and the Irishmen of Enniskillen, who had not indeed before fought against the imperial armies; but who, at the beginning of the war, had shown on the bloody field of Tournay that they had not degenerated since the days

when at Blenheim and Ramilies horse and foot alike went down before their furious and irresistible charge. There were the Household troops, not yet glittering with cuirasses, but burning with desire once more to show that no breastplate ever tempered by smith or hammered by armourer could render its wearer more invincible than the resolute heroism which glowed within the breast of every Briton worthy of the name. Above all, there was that unconquerable British infantry, whose backs no foeman had ever seen, whose bayonet no hostile battalion had ever withstood. There was that glorious light division, the school of the lamented Moore, whose conquering shout had been heard in every battle-field of the late war, and who were destined to have no feeble influence on the result of the impending conflict. There were the Guards of the sovereign, once more about to show that they were no carpet knights, fit only for the gay streets and glittering ball-rooms of the capital, but as redoubtable as warriors as they were chivalrous courtiers; and that still, as in the days of Orlando,

Le cortesie, l' audaci imprese,

were united; and that its high-born nobles were by courage and endurance, as well as by birth and degree, fitting leaders for the more hardly-nurtured peasants who filled the ranks.

But neither the resolute aspect of these unconquered bands, nor the report of his generals, abated the certain assurance of victory which Napoleon entertained. He was superior to them in numbers; it is not so easy to ascertain the precise strength* of his as of the British

* Siborne makes the French army at Waterloo 71,947 men and 246 guns; Charras states it at 72,000 and 240 guns; Alison, at 80,094 men and 252 guns. Both Siborne and Alison speak doubtingly of the precise accuracy of

army; but it is beyond a doubt that in infantry he was at least equal to his enemies; that his cavalry outnumbered them by above 3,000 sabres, and his artillery by nearly 100 guns. And if his own mode of calculation were to be admitted, that British and French soldiers were equal to each other, but that one soldier of either was equal to two of any other nation, his superiority was out of all proportion. While, to execute his orders in the leading of his columns, Kellermann and Lefebvre, D'Erlon and Lobau, Milhaud and Cambronne, above all Soult, Wellington's old antagonist, and the hero of Austerlitz, and Ney, the bravest of the brave, the saviour of the army in the retreat from Russia, stood by his side. D'Erlon's division was posted on the right, Reille's on the left; Lobau was in the centre; the cavalry was ranged in heavy masses behind the right and left extremities of the line; while in reserve as usual stood a third line, consisting of the infantry and cavalry of the guard, whose final charge had decided many a hard-fought field, and who doubted not that, should need be, the result of this one would not discredit their well-earned reputation. As with the allied army, the artillery was in front, its far greater numbers presenting a denser and more formidable array than the inadequate train, which, in spite of his earnest entreaties, were all that Wellington's superiors had placed at his disposal.

At dawn a drizzling rain was still falling, but after two or three hours it ceased, and the day continued dry, though cloudy. The British army prepared and ate a

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these statements: and from Napoleon's own words (quoted by Alison, xiv. 10), that he estimated the British and the Prussian division which might be on their left at upwards of 90,000 men, and that his own army was "less numerous,' one would be led to infer that Siborne and Charras rather underrate his force.

hurried breakfast, and then in silent order awaited the attack. But it was not to be delivered yet. The great quantity of rain which had fallen during the previous day and night had made the ground between the hostile armies so heavy and unfavourable for the rapid movement of troops, that Napoleon deferred the signal for some hours, to allow time for it to become drier and firmer; perhaps he also thought that the delay might be of service to him, by giving more time for the development of Grouchy's operations against the Prussians, which might prevent them from coming to Wellington's support. And in the meanwhile, to give additional encouragement to his men, he passed along the front of the entire line, accompanied by his whole staff, in deliberate and almost triumphal review, occasionally addressing a few words of exhortation to a distinguished corps, or to a well-known commander, and receiving assurances of their sincere devotion to his cause, and of their undoubting confidence in his genius and success, in the enthusiastic acclamations with which they greeted every step of his progress.

But the anxiety with which the signal was looked for was not confined to the armies about to engage. The tranquillity of the whole of Europe depended upon the event of the conflict, and the hopes and the fears of all nations and of all classes were directed towards the narrow battle-field on which so vast and momentous an issue was to be decided. Still more in many minds did the renown of the contending generals add to the interest with which their coming struggle was regarded. As yet neither of them had ever met their equal; the French emperor had won his way from the humblest position to an imperial crown by his military genius; and had even created principalities and raised thrones for his

brothers and his kinsmen, of which, had his own ambition been less insatiable, he might probably have secured to most of them the permanent and unmolested enjoyment. In the course of a few years he had subdued almost every nation, and had entered as a conqueror into almost every metropolis on the continent of Europe. He had triumphed over the hardy population of Russia's ice-bound plains, as well as over the effeminate inhabitants of the Italian vales. Even the stubborn mountaineers of Switzerland, though Hofer and Spechbacker were as dauntless and as skilful as any who in former ages had encountered Francis at Marignan, or had broken the power of Charles on the fatal field of Nancy, had proved unable to preserve their independence when assailed by the profound military skill of the universal conqueror. He had not indeed always been victorious, but, except when overpowered by numbers, he had never suffered a decisive defeat; while the vastness of his combinations, and the energy and rapidity of his operations, gave evidence of a genius far superior to that of the most successful of his previous antagonists. From the throne which he had won he had been driven by overpowering hosts; but he had been borne back to it on the shoulders of his army under circumstances resembling romance rather than reality; and he was leading on the flower of that army, veterans whose fidelity and courage he had proved in many a hard-fought campaign, and many a glorious victory, and who burned with eagerness to fix him, even though it should be at the cost of their own lives, firmly on the throne on which they had so lately replaced him.

The British general also owed his proud position to the pre-eminence of his military genius, proved over every description of troops in every variety of climate; he had

not indeed desolated unoffending countries by successful invasion, dethroned hereditary monarchs, or established his own sovereignty over his nation, from admiration of his talents and of his triumphs willingly submitting to his yoke; but, under the guidance of a better regulated ambition, by his victories over the irregular myriads of Asiatic warriors, he had extended and confirmed the dominion of his King in the East; and by a long series of campaigns in Europe he had delivered the allies of that monarch from foreign domination and oppression when all but himself despaired of their deliverance. And these, his latter triumphs, had been achieved not over Belgian, or Austrian or Prussian soldiers, whose military qualities Napoleon estimated so cheaply, but over the French emperor's own choicest veterans, led by the most brave and skilful of his marshals. In him they, the most renowned band of warriors who ever assembled round a single standard, had successively found their conqueror. And now, Junot and Jourdain, and Victor and Massena, and Ney, and Marmont, and Soult, having all proved alike unequal to the contest with him, he was about to measure his skill with him whom they all acknowledged for their master.

It was not yet eleven o'clock when a Prussian officer arrived at the British outposts with intelligence that a strong division under General Bülow had already reached St. Lambert, a village not above four miles from the centre of the allied position. And shortly after that* hour, Napoleon, whose soldiers had long been waiting for that signal, gave orders to commence the attack. Confiding in the superior numbers and quality of his troops, he did

* There is a remarkable variation in the accounts of the hour at which the battle begun. Siborne and Charras both agree in stating it at about half-past eleven. Alison, with singular particularity, says that the village clock of Nivelles (which, however, was some miles distant, and could not possibly

not trust on this day for success to elaborate manœuvres, but hoped by the straightforward vehemence of repeated assaults, to carry the position of the allies before it should be possible for any support to be received from the Prussians, even if they should be preparing to afford any; of which, from a belief that their disorder after the battle of Ligny was much greater than it really was, he had some doubts. The design of Wellington, who, as we have seen, had better information of the condition and movements of his allies, was simply to maintain his position firmly till their promised assistance should arrive. Even if the different foreign divisions under his command should prove steady enough to hold their ground against their assailants, he knew that they would be unequal to the execution of any such rapid operations as would be required in a forward movement; but if he could protract the contest so as to avoid disaster till Blucher should throw his sword into the scale, the most decisive results might be expected from the onset of his fresh battalions upon the French columns, weary and diminished by the struggle of the morning.

Napoleon's original intention had been to begin the battle by a grand attack upon the left and centre of the allied army. But he subsequently postponed this movement, and the first assault was made upon the important post of Hougoumont. Long and stern and bloody was the conflict; musketry and cannon poured their ceaseless storm upon the orchard in its front, while under cover of their fire the attacking column reached the trees and

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have been heard on the field of battle) was striking eleven when the first gun was fired from the French centre. Wellington calls the time about ten, but in a later letter says that he believes the battle began at eleven, and Napoleon afterwards fixed it at twelve. It seems probable that half-past eleven was as near the real time as it was possible to fix it.

pushed on rapidly towards the walls. Musketry and cannon, and under the direction of Wellington himself, shells also replied with equal fury and with still greater effect: more than once the assailants were forced back; but fresh columns were quickly moved up to their support, till at last they acquired a firm footing in the orchard, and approached the walls only to be struck down by the deadly fire of the well-protected garrison. For seven hours assault after assault was hurled by Napoleon with increasing vehemence against the devoted fortress, and the last was as fruitless as the first. So dense and fearless were the attacking columns that Müffling (a colonel in the Prussian service, of very distinguished abilities, who during the campaign was sent to attend upon Wellington, in order to maintain the communication between him and Blucher) despaired of the successful defence of the post; but Wellington knew his men better, and never doubted them for a moment. He replied to the Prussian that "he had thrown into it "Macdonell" (a colonel of the Coldstream Guards in command of the detachment thus employed), and nobly did that gallant officer fulfil the trust reposed in him. Once so fierce were the assailants, and so great the strength of their overpowering numbers, that a body of them actually burst open the gate, and forced an entrance into the court-yard; but Macdonell himself with some of his officers by sheer strength reclosed the gate, and the court-yard became the grave of all the enemies who had entered it.

Incensed at the pertinacity of the defence, and at the heavy loss which the attacking battalions had sustained, Napoleon at last turned a battery of howitzers against the buildings, and their well-aimed shells speedily set the dwelling-houses on fire; but even this disaster could not

quell the spirit of the heroic Guards; though some of their wounded comrades perished miserably in the blazing buildings to which they had been removed, those who were unhurt still kept up a ceaseless fire upon their assailants; and, having inflicted upon them a loss out of all proportion to their own numbers, remained till the end of the fight masters of the post which had been so worthily entrusted to them.

A little later in the afternoon a similar assault was made upon La Haie Sainte. The defence of that post had been committed to a detachment of the German Legion under Major Baring, who, in discharge of the trust reposed in them, displayed a valour nowise inferior to that of the Hougoumont garrison. For five hours they also repelled every charge that the furious enemy in apparently overwhelming numbers made upon them; but at last their ammunition was expended, and through some mistake, in spite of Baring's repeated applications for a fresh supply, they were unable to procure more: finding their fire cease, the French renewed their assaults with greater vigour, scaling the walls and from their summit commencing a fire upon the Germans to which they had no longer any means of replying. Then and not till then Baring withdrew the remnant of his intrepid band, and returned to his comrades in the main line, to whom his protracted resistance had proved of most momentous service.

It was about one o'clock, Ney had prepared a heavy attack upon the centre and left of Wellington's line; and a vast body of picked troops, above 18,000 in number, and supported by above seventy guns, and led by D'Erlon, was awaiting Napoleon's signal to advance, when suddenly the French emperor, casting his eyes around him in every direction, perceived

at some distance on his right a dense body, the character of which was for a short time doubtful, some of his officers taking it for a clump of trees, but which was soon ascertained to be the advanced guard of Bülow's Prussians. Napoleon at once sent off orders to Grouchy to march towards the field of battle, in the hope of crushing the Prussian general before he had got clear of the defiles of St. Lambert; at the same time detaching some divisions of cavalry to watch and impede the advance of the enemy; and then gave Ney the order for which he was looking. At his word the first grand attack was made on the main line of the allies; the French columns rushed down the slope in front of their own position with that brilliant impetuosity which always distinguishes a French charge, raising so loudly their battle-cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" that it was heard even above the din of their batteries, which thundered over their heads upon the battalions against which they were advancing. Leaving La Haie Sainte on their left, they detached one column to check the Nassau troops in Papelotte and La Haie, and the rest, numbering in their ranks above 13,000 men, rapidly ascended the rising ground on which Picton was awaiting them. His British regiments had been sadly thinned by the fight at Quatre Bras, and could not now muster above 3,000 bayonets; and besides them, he had only a division of Dutch and Belgian troops of somewhat greater numbers, which, even had it stood firm, would not have given him half the force which D'Erlon was leading against him. The Dutch, however, had been greatly frightened and disordered by the cannonade; and as soon as the French columns came near and prepared to use their muskets, they ran off in undisguised flight, almost trampling down some of our companies in their haste, and never stopped till they reached the other

side of the hill, where they remained during the rest of the day in all the safety of contented infamy, without once attempting to take a part in the fearful conflict which the British were maintaining against the invaders of their country. Wellington was at hand and saw their flight; but serious as its consequences might have been, it could not disturb his calmness for a moment, and only extorted from him a remark to one of his attendants that they were "pretty scamps to win a battle with." But our regiments whom they were deserting bore it with less coolness, and would gladly have turned their fire upon them if they had not been restrained by their officers.*

Even when thus deprived of one half of his force, Picton was not dismayed: trusting to the invincible steadiness of his British regiments, he deployed them into a line only two deep, poured a destructive fire into the advancing columns as they rose over the crest of the ridge, and then with marvellous hardihood led his men on to charge four times their numbers with the bayonet. While in the act of cheering them on he himself fell dead, pierced through the temples by a musket-ball; but his division, as resolute to avenge his fall as they had been to follow his example, dashed forward with increased vehemence, and before the French could deploy drove them ignominiously down the hill, taking many prisoners. The disorder of the enemy was complete. Lord Uxbridge changed it into a headlong rout. They had advanced accompanied by heavy squadrons of cuirassiers; and he, seeing the weakness of Picton's battalions, and fearing lest they should be overmatched, resolved not only to meet their cavalry with one division of British horse, but to launch another against their

* Malcolm, ii., 102.

infantry. He put himself at the head of the Household brigade, strengthened on this day by the 1st Dragoon Guards, and led them in person to the charge; the opposing squadrons met one another almost at a gallop; the shock was terrible, but the conflict was brief; not only in stature and bulk, but in skill and swordsmanship also the British horsemen proved far superior to their opponents, and soon drove them back in utter confusion and with enormous loss. At the same time, Ponsonby, to whom Uxbridge had committed the task of assailing the infantry, made even greater havoc among them. One column, more immediately opposite to the space which the flight of the Dutch had left vacant, was still advancing in good order, and Pack was preparing to meet it with dauntless courage but with very unequal force, when the Dragoons, the Royals, the Grays, and the Enniskillens fell upon it, broke it in every direction, took the eagle of one of its most celebrated regiments, the 45th, which by its great exploits on former fields had earned from its comrades the honourable title of "The Invincible;" captured a similar trophy from the 28th, and pursued their victorious course, slaughtering heaps upon heaps, and taking thousands of prisoners, till, uniting two of Vandeleur's light regiments, and elated with their success, they dashed right up to the French lines, where they fell with almost unabated vigour on the thundering batteries, slaying the artillerymen, hamstringing the horses, cutting the harness to pieces, and rendering forty, or according to some accounts eighty guns wholly useless to Napoleon for the rest of the day.

But glorious as their achievement was, and greatly as it contributed to the eventual triumph, the glory and the advantage were not purchased without heavy loss to ourselves. Their ranks had unavoidably been disordered

by their own success; their horses had been rendered breathless by the rapidity of their charge up the hill; part of the support which Lord Uxbridge had provided for them had, through unforeseen difficulties of the ground, been prevented from coming up in time; and while they were retiring in disorder, they were charged by powerful brigades of French lancers, and being unable to rally so as to oppose anything like a regular front to their assailants, they were driven back with the loss of half their numbers, their gallant leader, Ponsonby, being among the slain.

It was four o'clock, and the loss of the French had been immense, without their having as yet gained the very smallest advantage at any point of the battle: but, in spite of the defeat which his horse had already sustained, Napoleon gave orders for a fresh cavalry charge against the British right. In former days he had gained more than one battle in Germany by the free use which the admirable discipline of his squadrons had enabled him to make of them to seize important positions, while the opposing infantry were too much surprised and dismayed to resist them; and he now resolved to try and secure the success which seemed otherwise unattainable by a similar manœuvre.* Quickly did Ney, to whom the task of marshalling the different attacking columns was especially committed, collect a splendid body of upwards of 5,000 horse, Milhaud's cuirassiers, and Lefebvre's lancers of the guard, and send them forward, still sanguine of victory. Their valour too was vain: Wellington had foreseen the movement, and had taken instant steps to meet it, bringing up General Chassé's Dutch brigade from the low

* See Wellington's letter to Lord W. Russell, July, 1826.—Dispatches, 2nd ed., vol. viii., 340.

ground towards Braine la Leud, which it had hitherto occupied; directing cavalry to watch their opportunity on the enemy's flank; and strengthening his batteries in front of the expected attack. The French artillery, which had never ceased its roar since the commencement of the battle, poured forth its hail with redoubled violence as their squadrons rushed up the slope to assail the light division upon which, with one brigade of the 4th division, their onset chiefly fell. Our men, by Wellington's direction, had been lying on the ground rather behind the crest of the hill, so as to derive from it some shelter from the overpowering cannonade; but at the approach of the enemy they rose up, resumed their ground, and formed in square to encounter them.

The great Italian minstrel of chivalry bewailed in passionate strains the injury done to the warlike character by the introduction of artillery, "a wicked and "base invention of the enemy of human nature, by "which military glory is destroyed, the warrior is "deprived of the fame which is his due, and valour "and virtue are extinguished."* But had the poet lived at a later period, when these engines of destruction had been brought to a perfection of which he and his contemporaries never dreamed, he would have seen ample cause to own that the heroes of the 19th

Il nemico empio
Dell' umana natura, il qual del telo
Fu l' inventor. . . .
Come trovasti, o scelerata e brutta
Invenzion mai loco in uman core?
Per te la militar gloria è distrutta,
Per te il mestier dell' arme è senza onore;
Per te è il valore e la virtù ridutta
Che spesso par del buono il rio migliore.
Non più la gagliardia, non più l'ardire
Per te può in campo al paragon venire.

ARIOSTO, *Orlando Fur.*, xi., 22, 26.

century, who exposed their unprotected breasts to bullet and shell, were as brave as any who ever wore panoply or charged with lance; that they deserved as undying a renown as even his own strains could throw over the doughty acts of Orlando and Ruggiero: nay, though the Victoria Cross had not yet been devised by a sovereign jealous of the honour of even her meanest soldiers, to reward their noble daring with prizes shared by them in common with their officers, that even the common troopers of the host now displayed a valour which in olden days was thought to be the exclusive attribute of knights and nobles. No more dauntless charge was ever made by troops than that which the British infantry now awaited; our batteries poured an unremitting fire on the massy columns of the French cavaliers, which was redoubled as they came to close quarters; still, though the front ranks fell, their comrades pressed on as resolutely as if no such destruction were among them. Soon the assailants were among our guns, but Wellington's precautions had saved them from becoming their prey. By his instructions, as the enemy approached, the artillerymen unlimbered one wheel of each gun, and retired with it into the nearest square of infantry; and to shake one of those heroic regiments was as impossible as if they had been rooted in the earth on which they stood. With unavailing valour the cuirassiers spurred their chargers up to their very faces; the British bayonets bristling one above each other formed an impenetrable hedge, their deadly fire brought down horses and men in one terrible promiscuous slaughter. In vain the French tried every side of those impregnable squares; all were alike impenetrable, immovable; all alike vomited fire and death upon the frantic riders and their steeds. Often the assailants retired a brief distance in order to re-

organize their shattered squadrons; but ever as they withdrew the artillerymen sprang forth from the squares in which they had been sheltered, reloaded their guns, and poured their renewed fire upon their thinned ranks. It was alike in vain that reinforcements equalling their original numbers, and including even a strong division of the heavy cavalry of the guard, were sent to aid them from the French lines: the valour of these fresh troops could not be more brilliant than theirs, and was equally fruitless. Our gunners seemed if possible to improve in the rapidity and truth of their fire, and the Guards fell before their iron storm and the close musketry of the squares as helpless as their predecessors. Constantly present in the thickest of the fight was Wellington himself, directing the advance of some regiments, encouraging others to stand firm under the unparalleled violence of the attacks which came wave after wave upon them like the spring-tide of a stormy sea. Every event of the day had but increased his confidence in its result, and his men were as sanguine, and animated with the same patriotic resolution as himself. "Stand fast, 95th," said he; "we must not be beaten; what will they say in "England?" "Never fear, sir," replied the unfaltering veterans, "we know our duty." Ever foremost too was Lord Uxbridge, and though one brigade of Dutch cavalry fled as fast as their brethren of the infantry, and though a splendid looking regiment of Hanoverians followed their disgraceful example, he still led on the heavy cavalry in many a prompt and effective charge, constantly keeping a strong body of light dragoons in reserve for a decisive effort at a later period.

But while the French were thus perishing in vain on the right of the allied line, an event equally decisive of the contest was taking place at the extremity of the field.

1815.

The Prussians were beginning to make their advance felt; though not indeed yet in force sufficient to enable them to take a very effective share in the action, they were formidable enough to compel Napoleon to send a strong division to check their advance. Wellington had expected to be able to avail himself of their aid at an earlier hour; but the difficulties of their march, arising from the badness of the roads in which their artillery repeatedly stuck fast, were almost insurmountable, and would perhaps have proved wholly so had the Prussians been led by any less determined chief than Blucher himself. Often did his men, almost exhausted by the repeated labour of extricating their guns from the deep mud, declare that they could proceed no further; and as often did the aged marshal, though he was seventy years of age, and had been sorely hurt at Ligny, urge them on, telling them that advance they must, that he had pledged his honour to Wellington to join him, and that he knew they would not make him break his word. His reliance on them made them renew their exertions. Before five o'clock one battalion opened a distant cannonade upon the French right from the skirts of the wood of Paris; and in less than another hour, three more battalions began to line the hedges around Smohain, and to harass the French in that quarter with a dropping fire of musketry; though they were not yet assembled in sufficient numbers to venture on more active and decisive operations. By six o'clock Bülow began to advance upon Planchenoit, a village in the immediate rear of the French centre, and Napoleon was compelled to send Lobau's division, supported by a small body of the Guard, to check his dangerous progress. Lobau succeeded for a time; but it was plain that the Prussians would soon be so much strengthened

as to renew the contest with more effect: and as a last and only chance, Napoleon determined to make a simultaneous attack upon the whole of the British line.

Both armies were by this time greatly diminished in numbers by the carnage which seven hours of ceaseless fighting had made in the ranks. More than one of the British generals of division had sent to Wellington to beg for reinforcements to enable him to hold his ground, and had received the information, "that if need should "be, he himself and each division must die where they "stood, but that any reinforcement of them was impos-"sible." And Napoleon also, to whom Ney had lately sent an urgent entreaty for more troops, had replied, "Where am I to get them? Do you expect me to make "them?" But the greater part of the infantry of the French Guard, and one strong brigade of its cavalry, was as yet fresh and entire: their final charge had decided many a former battle, and Napoleon still cherished a hope that they were once more to prove irresistible.

Amid the frightful carnage which had taken place, Wellington's coolness and self-possession had never failed him. No imminence of personal danger shook his nerves; no fear for the result agitated his mind, even for a moment. A cannon-ball struck a branch from a tree close to his head: "That," said he "is good prac-"tice; they did not fire so well in Spain." Storms of bullets ploughed up the ground and levelled the ranks of his followers on every side of him; and as the balls from his own batteries answered them even more rapidly, he cheered his artillerymen with a promise of victory; "Hard pounding this, gentlemen, but we will pound "the longest." He saw the coming tempest from far, and rapidly made such dispositions of his remaining forces as might best enable him to meet it. He would

gladly have strengthened his line with some of the Prussian battalions now not far separated from his left wing, but Zieten, their commander, doubted whether he was at liberty to detach any troops from his division for that purpose; so the British General had nothing to trust to but his own original resources; and even while he was marshalling them he was called off by the disorder of the Brunswick division in the centre, which now that La Haie Sainte had fallen into the hands of the French, could scarcely bear up against the incessant cannonading and repeated assaults to which it was exposed. The Prince of Orange too, who, though he had shown but little skill, had fought all day with the most intrepid gallantry, was now struck down by a severe wound, and the Nassau battalion, which he was leading at the time, seemed dismayed at his fall; but Wellington, who saw everything, flew to the spot, and by his presence and exhortations restored their courage and their order. Vivian brought up his division of Hussars in their rear to support them; and then Wellington, being relieved from his fears for his centre, returned with all speed to his right wing, which was destined to bear the brunt of the approaching storm.

Never did that noble French Guard advance with more enthusiasm. Napoleon, whose all was at stake, had advanced to a prominent position in the line of their advance, and as they passed addressed to them a few words of affectionate encouragement, and pointed to the British position as that which their proved valour was now to make their own. Ney himself led them on, and preceded by a cloud of skirmishers, who kept up an unremitting fire, partly with a view of concealing his column under the smoke, pushed forward with terrible vigour against the British right.

Foreseeing the direction of his attack, Wellington had

strengthened his batteries in that quarter, which poured a concentrated fire on the advancing foes, and made fearful havoc in their leading ranks. More than one of their generals fell wounded or dead; Ney's horse was killed, but not even for a moment did the intrepid marshal relax his impetuosity. He drew his sword and advanced on foot at the head of his men, who seeing nothing in their front but a few mounted officers, flattered themselves that when they arrived at the batteries, of which they were now within a few yards, their victory would be gained; for Wellington had thrown back the British Guards also a little behind the crest of the hill, and had bid them lie down to obtain such shelter as thus they might from the French fire, while he himself, among the small knot of officers in their front, watched Ney's advance. "Stand up, Guards," was his brief command as the bearskins of the French Grenadiers rose above the crest of the slope. At his word, the Guards sprang to their feet, and before the French had recovered their amazement at this unexpected apparition, poured a deadly volley into their ranks, which struck 300 of them to the ground. Undaunted even by such frightful loss, the column endeavoured to deploy; Wellington gave it no time to do so, but ordered Maitland to charge. The brigade, which had long been waiting for such a command, eagerly obeyed it, and with levelled bayonets drove the French some way down the hill. It was well that the front of that position had been held by such a dauntless battalion, for the Dutch troops in their rear, which had lately been brought up from Braine la Leud, though as yet they had been exposed to neither loss nor fatigue, even while the British Guards stood between them and the foe, were scared by the mere sound of the French muskets, and fell back in disorder;

nor, though their officers in several instances gallantly exerted themselves to bring them to a sense of their duty, could they be induced to resume their place in the line.

A second column of the French Guard, advancing still further to the British right, was a few minutes later in reaching our front, but obtained no advantage by the delay. Maitland had re-established his brigade on the crest of the hill, and as they came up met them with as fierce a fire as had crushed their comrades, while Colborne wheeled the 52nd round upon their flank, and after pouring in a most destructive fire, which was gallantly replied to, charged them with the bayonet, and drove them before him in such irremediable confusion that every attempt of their leaders to rally them was vain; nor during the short remainder of the day was it found possible to reunite them in an available body.

Never since its first formation had the Imperial Guard been thus broken. Yet even now the victory was not secured, and had Wellington been a general of less unhesitating energy it might yet have been wrested from him, for Napoleon was vigorously rallying Ney's repulsed column. He had still a brigade of cavalry in reserve, and Reille's and D'Erlon's divisions, which had followed the Guards as their support, had not yet come into contact with our lines, but were still advancing in disciplined order, though somewhat confused by the crowd of fugitives driven back upon their ranks. But Wellington gave them no leisure to recover from their confusion; he perceived that by this time Blucher was making important progress in the direction of Planchenoit, and he lost not a moment in availing himself to the utmost of the advantages which he had himself gained, and of this long-expected co-operation of the Prussians. He at once launched Vivian's brigade against Napoleon's reserve

cavalry, and ordered his whole line to advance against the French position. He was well aware that the French troops yet unbroken were still more numerous than those which he could employ with any confidence; but he reckoned on the enemy being discouraged and demoralized by the unwonted defeat of their Guard, and that surprise and dismay would deprive them of half their strength.

The event did not belie the expectation of his judicious audacity. Raising his hat from his head, he gave the signal for the advance. Our enemies had often felt the stern silence* of our infantry when making a charge as far more terrible in its resolution than the outcry raised on such occasions by their own equally fervid but less constant and sustained courage; but now for once the enthusiasm of the troops, so firmly held back during the livelong day, and at last let loose in the certainty of triumph, broke down the usual barriers of their orderly composure. The signal was received with a shout by the whole line, which had long been chafing under the restraint in which it had been so skilfully held, and who now, with enthusiastic exultation resistlessly mingling with their disciplined resolution, poured down the slope.

* "Cet affreux silence," spoken of by more than one French writer as so different from the noisy shouts of their own countrymen. Homer had made a similar distinction between the habits of the Greeks and Trojans.

Τρῶες μὲν κλαγγῇ ἐνοπῇτ' ἴσαν, ὄρνιθες ὡς ·
Ἥύτε περ κλαγγὴ γεράνων πέλει οὐρανόθι πρό.
. . . . . .
Οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἴσαν σιγῇ μένεα πνείοντες Ἀχαιοί
Ἐν θυμῷ μεμαῶτες ἀλεξέμεν ἀλλήλοισιν.—*Il.* Γ. 2—9.

Thus translated by Pope:—

With shouts the Trojans, rushing from afar,
Proclaim their motions and provoke the war.
* * * * *
But silent, breathing rage resolved and skilled
By mutual aids to fix a doubtful field,
Swift march the Greeks—.

But their forward movement showed the vastness of the loss which they had sustained; so small were the advancing battalions, and so wide the gaps between them, that some experienced officers feared for the result of so bold a step undertaken with such scanty means; and Lord Uxbridge even remonstrated with Wellington on its danger.* But Wellington had no fear; he felt sure that, even should the French resist the attack, the cavalry in the second line would be a sufficient support to the infantry, weak as it was, and equally sure that the French would no longer have the heart to make more than a feeble show of resistance. His accurate calculation of, and fearless reliance on the moral effect which circumstances had on the courage of his own and the French army is pointed out by Napier in his account of his achievements in the Pyrenees as the cause of more than one of his triumphs, and as not the least admirable of his qualifications for the command of a great army; and it had never been more conspicuous than now, when he fell as fearlessly upon Napoleon himself as ever he had advanced against the least skilful of his marshals.

Forward therefore at last did the British army rush to its victory. At that moment the setting sun, as if a partner in their triumph, for the first time on that eventful day burst through the surrounding clouds, and gleamed with happy omen on the British bayonets as they hurried forward. Nor horse nor foot could stand before that triumphant onset. Wellington himself rode among the foremost, directing every movement, and so regardless of his own safety as to call forth the remonstrances of those around him. So much had his exertions during the day exposed him to the enemy's fire,

* Muffling, p. 250.

that the greater part of his staff were killed or wounded; but Providence watched over himself, and he was still unhurt. The commander of the cavalry had worse fortune. As Lord Uxbridge was quitting the Duke, with the intention of leading Vivian's brigade himself in this its last charge, he was struck on the thigh by a grape shot, and was forced to relinquish that honour to others. But Vivian showed as much judgment as valour. Vandeleur, who on Lord Uxbridge's fall succeeded to the command of the cavalry, brought up another brigade to his support, and the two commanders proceeded triumphantly, scattering the yet unbroken cavalry, preventing the possibility of any rally on the part of the disordered infantry, storming and capturing the still active batteries.

Even the presence and exertions of Napoleon himself were unable to arrest the disorder. It had become a rout. He had struggled to the last, and even as our Guards and light division advanced he had thrown himself into one of the squares of his Guard in the vain hope that they might yet stem the torrent that was overwhelming their comrades; but presently they too were driven back; and exclaiming that "all was lost for the "present," he rode slowly from the field. Wellington pushed forwards without halting till he reached Genappe, and there late at night he was overtaken by Blucher, where, finding that there was no longer the slightest attempt at resistance on the part of the French, and that the Prussians were in sufficient force to undertake pursuit of the beaten enemy, in which the British were far too fatigued and exhausted to share, he returned to the field of battle, and having ordered his army to bivouac on the ground which had been occupied in the morning by the enemy, he returned for the night to his old quarters at Waterloo.

It was with an unwonted conflict of feelings that he

pondered on the events of the past day. No doubt his first thoughts must have been those of joy and exultation at the completeness of his victory, and at the probability which it afforded that that single blow, so heavily dealt, would suffice to restore tranquillity to Europe. Little too as seemed to be the power which visions of glory ever had over his mind or conduct, he must have been more than human not to have reflected with some satisfaction on the vast addition which this crowning triumph had made to his fame; and on the recollection that it had been won at great disadvantage over that mighty conqueror with whom no other general in the world had ever been able to contend on equal terms. But if these were his first thoughts, his second turned with a pain, wellnigh counterbalancing their joy, to the heavy price at which such glory and such advantages had been purchased, to the gallant followers and comrades, many of them linked to him also by the still more endearing title of known and chosen friends, who now lay mutilated, dying, or dead on the fatal plain of his and of their glory. Even on his own bed, while he himself rested that night on a heap of straw covered with his military cloak, lay one of his most trusted aides-de-camp* painfully breathing forth his life. And if the forest itself,†

> Waving above them her green leaves,
> Dewy with Nature's tear-drops,

seemed to the fancy of the poet, all inanimate that it was, to grieve over the dead soon to be hidden beneath

* Sir Alexander Gordon.

† "And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with Nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning dead."—*Childe Harold*, iii., 27.

its turf, what wonder if he, by whose side and at whose word they had fought and fallen, poured forth bitter tears, honourable both to the weeper and the wept, for their loss; declared that "the glory so dearly bought "was no consolation to him;" and while the rest of the world was talking of nothing but of the greatness of his triumph, himself expressed many an earnest and sincere prayer that he might never gain such another at such a cost?*

* This was not a momentary ebullition of feeling on the part of Wellington, for once at his own house, when the conversation turned upon Moreau's confession of his delight at gaining his first victory, the Duke remarked that if he were to speak of his own feeling when it had been his fortune to gain a battle, he should say that it had generally been painful; for there was grief for those who had fallen; and next, it imposed instantly the necessity of doing more, as no commander could remain quiet after victory.—Rush's 'Residence at St. James's,' 2nd Ser., vol. i., p. 318.

It is a remarkable fact that the division at Hal, though not above seven miles distant from the field, never heard the slightest sound of the battle. Sir Charles Colville used often to relate, that having only orders to see that the French did not get by him on the right, he sent an aide-de-camp to the Duke before daybreak on the 18th, for additional orders. The aide-de-camp did not return till late at night; and the first intimation which Sir Charles received of there having been any battle at all was from the orders which now reached him to pursue the beaten enemy with all speed.

*** By the favour of the present Duke of Wellington, the author is permitted to present his readers with an interesting memorandum drawn up by the Duke himself on General Clausewitz's account of the battle. The memorandum has already appeared in Mr. Gleig's translation of M. de Brialmont's work. See Appendix.

APPENDIX.

Commentary by the late Duke of Wellington, on a narrative of the Battle of Waterloo, by the Prussian General Clausewitz.

"In discussing the battle of Waterloo, and the military movements previous thereto, it is necessary to advert to the state of Europe at the moment—to the military position of the allies, on the one hand, and of Buonaparte and France on the other.

"The powers of Europe had, in 1814, made peace with France, governed by King Louis XVIII. A congress was assembled at Vienna, composed of ministers from the principal powers engaged in the previous war, and from his Most Christian Majesty, to regulate and settle various points left unsettled by the treaties of peace, not only as between France and the powers engaged in the war, but questions affecting the relative interests of all, arising out of the long and extensive warfare, the consequence of the French Revolution.

"Buonaparte having abdicated his power, and having retired to the island of Elba, under the sanction of a treaty, returned to France early in March, 1815, with a detachment of his Guards, which had attended him to the island of Elba, and arrived at Paris on the 20th of March, and overturned the government of King Louis XVIII., who fled to Lille, and subsequently to Ghent and the Netherlands; and Buonaparte usurped the government of France.

"Whatever we may think of the settlement of the government of France, of the state of possession of the different parts of Europe and of the world, as fixed by the treaties of peace and by

the subsequent diplomatic transactions at Vienna, at that moment completed, they constituted, at that time, the public law of Europe, and the state of possession of the several powers under authority thereof. This must never be lost sight of in the consideration of this subject.

"From the moment in which Buonaparte drove Louis XVIII. from Paris, and usurped his throne, it was obvious that the war would be renewed; and the first thing that was done by the ministers of the allies at Vienna, upon learning the invasion of France by Buonaparte, his march upon Paris, and his usurpation of the government, was to renew, and render applicable to the circumstances of the moment, their former treaty of alliance, concluded at Chaumont in the month of March, 1814.

"Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington, being the plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty at the Congress of Vienna at this period, having concluded and signed the treaty of alliance on the 25th of March, and concluded all the arrangements connected with that instrument, and having been appointed to command the allied army assembled in the Netherlands, set out from Vienna to join the same, and reached Brussels in the first days of April.

"The treaty of peace of 1814 had rendered necessary the occupation of the provinces commonly called the Belgian Provinces, by an army composed of British, Hanoverian, and Dutch troops, under the command of His Royal Highness the hereditary Prince of Orange; the German Provinces, on the left bank of the Meuse, extended from the province of Lorraine to the junction of the Rhine with the Meuse, by Prussian troops; the Italian provinces, forming what had been called the kingdom of Italy, by the Austrian army; indeed, the Austrian army was, at about this time, engaged in the active operations of war with Murat, King of Naples; and the provinces in Poland forming the kingdom of Saxon Poland.

"Thus the armies of the allies were distributed in different parts of Europe, while the greater part of that of England had been detached to North America; and notwithstanding that the treaty of peace had been concluded at Ghent on the 24th of December, 1814, between his Britannic Majesty and the United States, sufficient time had not elapsed to enable his Britannic Majesty's ministers to bring back the troops to Europe.

"On the other hand, Buonaparte found an army in France

completely organized, consisting of not less than 250,000 men, with cannon and all that was required to make them efficient for the field. There were, besides, in the country many old soldiers available for the service who had been prisoners of war in England, in Russia, and elsewhere, besides the men discharged from the corps of the Imperial Guards. It is obvious that the first measures which the generals commanding the army of the allies could take must have been defensive. Those in the Belgian provinces, and those on the left bank of the Rhine, must have been strictly and cautiously formed on these principles.

"Their forces were weak in comparison with the French force opposed to, or which might be brought against them. The latter enjoyed other advantages in the nature and strength of their frontier.

"These allied troops were at the outposts; they were destined to protect the march of the other armies of the allies, and the countries which were intended to be the basis of the operations to be carried on against the enemy, for which the treaty of the 25th of March had made provision.

"The army in the Belgian provinces, under the command of the Duke of Wellington, from the first days of April, had particular interests to attend to—as each of the other armies had, each in the districts under its charge—besides the general operations of the war.

"That army, composed of British, Dutch, and Hanoverian troops, had to preserve the communications with England, Holland, and Germany. It was connected with the Prussian army by its left, the communication of which with Germany was absolutely necessary.

"The Prince Sovereign, afterwards King of the Netherlands, to whom the Belgian provinces had been ceded by the Congress of Vienna, had fixed the seat of his government at Brussels; and the King, Louis XVIII., having found himself under the necessity of withdrawing from France altogether, had fixed his residence at Ghent.

"Buonaparte had great advantages, whether for an offensive operation on the territory of the allies or for the defence of his own, in the number, the position, and the strength of the fortresses on the north-eastern frontier of France.

"He might fix and organize his armies within these, out of

sight, and almost without the knowledge of the allied generals, almost to the last moment previous to an attack, and it was impossible for the allies to attempt to carry on an offensive operation against the French position which should not include the means of carrying on one or more sieges, possibly at the same moment.

"The inconveniences, difficulties, and disadvantages of this defensive system were aggravated by the uncertainty of the length of time during which it must last.

"That is to say, till the Austrian armies, having terminated their operations in Italy against Murat, should have reached the Upper Rhine, and there formed a junction with the armies of Bavaria and Wurtemberg, and the Russian armies should have retrograded from Poland, should have crossed Germany, and have formed upon the Rhine, the Maine, and the Moselle.

"It is complained of by the Prussian historian, Clausewitz, that he had never been able to obtain the sight of a return of the army under the command of the Duke of Wellington, made up in the form of what is called a line of battle.

"This at best is the complaint of the want of a return made up in a particular form, and it would not have been noticed here if it were not desirable to draw the attention of the reader to the general tone and temper of this history. The reputation of its army, and, above all, of the generals commanding the same, is an object of the greatest importance to all nations; and we find the historians of all nations, excepting, as we see, those of the British nation, too ready to criticise the acts and operations, not only of the generals and armies of the enemies of their nation, but likewise of the best friends and allies of their nation, and even of those acting in co-operation with the armies of their own nation. This observation must be borne in mind throughout the perusal of Clausewitz's history.

"In respect to the return mentioned, it is forgotten by General Clausewitz that the army under the command of the Duke of Wellington was not like that under the command of Marshal Prince Blucher, composed of the troops of all arms and establishments, of and belonging to one nation; that they belonged to several nations, the infantry, cavalry, and artillery in some cases belonging each to different nations; that the several corps of troops, composing the allied army in question, were not of uniform

strength of numbers, whether considered by nations, by battalions, by brigades, or by divisions; that the discipline and military qualities of the several corps of troops, and, above all, their efficiency and military experience in the field, were very various.

"The greatest part of some of the corps composing the army was composed of men lately recruited. The whole of the Hanoverian army was of militia, excepting some battalions of the Hanoverian Legion, which properly belonged to the British army, and had served under the command of Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington in Spain.

"It was necessary to organize these troops in brigades, divisions, and corps d'armée with those better disciplined and more accustomed to war, in order to derive from their numbers as much advantage as possible. But these arrangements in allied armies, formed as this one was, are not matters of course; the same national feeling respecting its armies, even in the least powerful nation, which has been already adverted to as having an influence over the critical morality of the historian, is not without its influence in the formation of such arrangements of organization. No troops can be employed in an allied army excepting each corps and detachment under the immediate command of its own national officer.

"The organization and formation of corps to serve together, and under the command and superior direction of what officer, becomes, therefore, and became in this case, a matter which required great attention and labour, and of great difficulty.

"To these considerations was to be added, that some of the troops were fit only for garrison duties; while, on the other hand, the importance of the fortresses was so urgent as to require for these garrisons a proportion at least of the very best troops.

"This statement will serve to show that the formation of a return of the army under the command of Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington, as a line of battle, was not very easy.

"The two allied armies—the one in the Netherlands, the other in the provinces on the left bank of the Rhine—were, as has been already shown, necessarily on the defensive.

"They were waiting for the junction of other large armies, to attain, by their co-operation, a common object; but their defensive

position and immediate objects did not necessarily preclude all idea or plan of attack upon the enemy.

"The enemy might have so placed his army as to render the attack thereof advisable, or even necessary: in that case the allied generals must, and in all probability would, have taken the initiative; but, in the case existing in 1815, the enemy did not take such a position as is thus supposed; on the contrary, he took a position in which his numbers, his movements, and his designs could be concealed, protected, and supported by his formidable fortresses on the frontier, up to the last moment previous to their being carried into execution.

"The allied generals could not attack this position without being prepared to attack a superior army so posted; they could not, therefore, have the initiative in the way of attack.

"They had the option of taking the initiative in the way of defensive movement; but such defensive movement or alteration of the well-considered original position taken up by each of the allied armies must have been founded upon a conviction that such positions were faulty and might be improved, or upon an hypothesis of the intended movements of attack by the enemy. There was no reason to believe that the first was the case; and it must never be lost sight of, that to found upon an hypothesis which might and probably would prove erroneous, considering what the advantages were of the position of the enemy on the frontier, the alteration of the defensive position of the allied armies might have occasioned what is commonly called a false movement; and it must be observed, that whatever may be thought of Buonaparte as a leader of troops in other respects, there certainly never existed a man in that situation in any times in whose presence it was so little safe to make what is called a false movement.

"The initiative then rested with the enemy; and the course to be pursued by the allied generals respectively was to be prepared to move in all directions, to wait till it should be seen in what direction the attack should be made, and then to assemble the armies as quickly as possible to resist the attack, or to attack the enemy with the largest force that could be collected.

"There is a good deal of discussion in the history by General Clausewitz, upon the expediency of the maintenance of the defensive positions taken up by the allied armies, particularly by

that under the command of Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington; and that even for the attainment of the object in view, for the position of the last mentioned as detailed above, it would have been best to occupy a position in the country, having for its sole object the early junction of the two allied armies, with a view to fight a great battle with the enemy under the command of Buonaparte.

"It is not difficult to criticise the particular positions occupied by any army; which positions, as in this case, were never the objects of actual attack: it is not so easy a task, first to define precisely a particular object for the operations of a defensive nature for any army, excluding from the consideration not only political objects and views, but likewise those of a merely technical and military nature, such as in this case, the preservation of the communications of this army with England, with Holland, and with Germany; and next to define the positions to be occupied by two armies, in order to carry on such operations.

"Brussels, Ghent, the communications with England, Holland, and Germany were to be given up, and the armies were to unite, or to be prepared to unite, in order to fight a general battle with the enemy, as the best mode of securing all the objects of their respective defensive positions. But it is not stated or even hinted where each was to be posted, nor where they were to unite, nor where was to be the great field of battle on which the contest was to be decided.

"It is obvious that the historian could not indicate such positions: he was too wise to make the attempt.

"He cannot but be aware that when the allies should have abandoned their defensive positions in their Netherlands, and should have left it in the power of the enemy to occupy with his Hussars and light troops Brussels and Ghent, the communications with England and Holland through Antwerp, and with England through the towns on the Lysse and Ostend, they would not have been nearer the attainment of the object of fighting a general battle than while in the positions having for their objects to maintain and secure these advantages.

"The initiative for such general battle must still have been in the hands of Buonaparte. He might have avoided it only by remaining with his main body within the French frontier; while with his Hussars and light troops he could have possessed Brussels

and Ghent, and the communications with England and Holland, and with Germany through Holland.

"The historian shows in more than one passage of his history, that he is not insensible of the military and political value of good moral impressions, resulting from military operations. He is sensible of the advantage derived by the enemy from such impressions; but he cannot calculate the advantage on the one hand, or the disadvantage on the other, resulting from such impressions, in cases in which it is the object to blame the course of operations directed by a general, supposed to be a rival in reputation to one of the Prussian nation. He is aware of the object of Buonaparte to create throughout Europe, and even in England, a moral impression against the war, and to shake the power of the then existing administration in England. He is sensible of, and can contemplate, the effect of the moral impression upon the other armies of Europe, and upon the governments in whose service they were, resulting from the defeat, or even want of success, of the allied armies, under the command of the Duke of Wellington and Prince Blucher; but he is not sensible of, and cannot calculate upon, or even consider of, the effect of the moral impression resulting from the loss of Brussels and Ghent; the flight of the King of the Netherlands, and of the King, Louis XVIII., the creatures of the treaties of peace, and of the Congress of Vienna; and this, with the loss of the communications of the army under the Duke of Wellington, with England, Holland, and Germany, without making the smallest effort to save any of these objects.

"If this historian had inquired, however, whether in England or elsewhere, he would have found that the feeling upon such events would have been as strong as he admits it would in case of the want of success of the operations of the allied armies, whose operations are under discussion.

"In England, in particular, these supposed events would have been severely felt.

"But let us consider whether the abandonment of all the objects which the allies had in view, in maintaining any position in the Netherlands, would have enabled the generals of the allied armies the better to fight a great battle with the enemy.

"The enemy would have had the option whether to fight the battle or not, and the initiative of the movements preparatory to it,

after having acquired all the advantages placed in his hands; and the allied generals must have given up those objects, the protection of which alone, in a political or even a military view, could justify their fighting a battle at all, at least till they should be in a state of co-operation with the other armies of Europe.

"The enemy having the initiative, would have moved across the communications of the army under the Duke of Wellington. In possession of the great towns, of all the roads, and of the resources of the Belgian Provinces, he would have had to decide whether he would or not force the two allied armies to retire from the Meuse. But on the hypothesis that the enemy would fight a battle for such an object, why should the allies? The Duke of Wellington would have lost all for which, as the commander of an army, he ought to desire to contend, and neither his position nor that of the army under Prince Blucher could have been improved by a great battle, even under the hypothesis that the result would have been a great victory. Such a one would not have restored to the Duke of Wellington the advantages which he enjoyed in the state of preparation of the army under his command for the advance into France, in co-operation with the other allied armies, when they should have taken their stations, and should have been prepared to advance.

"The restoration of the communication with England, Holland, and Germany, which would have been the result of such successful battle, would not immediately have restored and replaced his magazines not located in fortresses, and which would have fallen into the enemy's hands by the supposed change of position with a view to fight this great battle. After all, the initiative of this battle must have rested with the enemy, and there could be no military reason for fighting it, or political reason, excepting the moral impression throughout the world of its successful result.

"It is useless to speculate upon supposed military movements which were never made, and operations which never took place, or the objects of the several chiefs or generals opposed to each other.

"But although it was not desirable that the Duke of Wellington should break up his defensive position in the Belgian Provinces, with a view to take one, with the army under his command, having solely in view the object of fighting a great battle in co-operation or conjunction with the Prussian army, it was still

desirable that he should occupy this defensive position in such a manner, and take such precautionary measures, as would enable him to assemble, at the earliest period of time, the largest disposable force at his disposition; after providing for the defence and security of his military communications with England, Holland, and Germany, and of the objects entrusted to his care and protection, under the treaty of peace, and by the acts of the allied ministers assembled in conference at Vienna. He accordingly, from the moment at which he arrived in the Netherlands in the beginning of April, turned his attention to the strengthening of the posts on the frontier, and works were constructed at Ostend, at Nieuport, Yprès, Amiens, Courtrai, Audenarde, Tournay, Ath, Mons, Charleroi, and Namur. It is true these were field-works, generally on the sites of the ancient works by which these towns were defended; the defence of which was aided by the ancient ditches and means of inundation.

"His orders at that time to the quartermaster-general and the general officers show what were his intentions in the various hypothetical cases therein stated.

"There are several great roads leading from the northern departments of France, and the great French fortresses therein situated, by each of which these provinces might have been invaded, and which it was necessary at least to observe. One from Lille upon Menin, Courtrai, and Ghent; one from Lille upon Tournay and Ghent, or upon Ath and Brussels; one from Condé upon Tournay, Ath, Enghein, and Brussels; one from Condé and Valenciennes upon Mons and Brussels. The last of these was a great paved road, upon which there was no obstacle of a defensive nature, excepting the field-works, of which it appeared that the Duke of Wellington had ordered the construction.

"The historian, Clausewitz, has detailed the position of the Prussian army, the distances of each post from the others, and the length of time which would elapse for the completion of the assembling of the whole. It cannot be stated that the allied army under the Duke of Wellington could have been assembled in an equally short period of time; but if it is considered that the objects for the protection of the army under the command of the Duke of Wellington were extended over a tract of country of greater length than were those protected by the allied army under

the command of Prince Blucher, it will be found that this part of the country, contiguous in its whole extent to the French frontier, and traversed in all parts by excellent paved roads, leading from some one or other of the French fortresses, required for its protection a system of occupation quite different from that adopted for the Prussian army under Field-Marshal Prince Blucher.

"But what follows will show, that notwithstanding the extension of the allied army under the command of the Duke of Wellington, such was the celerity of communication with all parts of it, that in point of fact his orders reached all parts of the army in six hours after he had issued them, and that he was in line in person with a sufficient force to resist and keep in check the enemy's corps, which first attacked the Prussian corps under General Ziethen, at daylight on the 15th of June. Having received the intelligence of that attack only at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 15th, he was at Quatre Bras before twenty-four hours on the 16th, with a sufficient force to engage the left of the French army.

"It is certainly true that he had known for some days of the augmentation of the enemy's force on the frontier, and even of the arrival of Buonaparte at the army; but he did not deem it expedient to make any movement, excepting for the assembly of the troops at their several alarm-posts, till he should hear of the decided movement of the enemy.

"The first account received by the Duke of Wellington was from the Prince of Orange, who had come in from the outposts of the army of the Netherlands to dine with the Duke at three in the afternoon. He reported that the enemy had attacked the Prussians at Thuin, that they had taken possession of, but had afterwards abandoned, Binch, that they had not yet touched the position of the army of the Netherlands. When the Prince was with the Duke, the staff-officer employed by Prince Blucher at the Duke's head-quarters, General Müffling, came to the Duke to inform him that he had just received intelligence of a movement of the French army, and their attack upon the Prussian troops at Thuin.

"It appears by the statement of the historian, that the posts of the Prussian corps of General Ziethen were attacked at Thuin at four o'clock on the morning of the 15th, and that General Ziethen

himself, with a part of his corps, retired, and was at Charleroi at about ten o'clock on that day. Yet the report thereof was not received at Brussels till three o'clock in the afternoon. The Prussian cavalry of the corps of Ziethen was at Gosselies and Fleurus on the evening and night of the 15th. Orders were forthwith sent for the march of the whole army to its left. The whole moved on that evening, and in the night, each division and portion separately; the whole being protected on the march by the defensive works constructed at the different points referred to and by their garrisons.

"The reserve which had been encamped in the neighbourhood, and cantoned in the town or in the neighbourhood of Brussels, were ordered to assemble in, and in the neighbourhood of, the Park at Brussels; which they did on that evening; and they marched in the morning of the 16th upon Quatre Bras, towards which post the march of all the troops, consisting of the left and centre of the army, and of the cavalry in particular, was directed.

"The Duke went in person at daylight in the morning of the 16th to Quatre Bras, where he found some Netherlands troops—cavalry, infantry, and artillery, which had been engaged with the enemy but lightly; and he went on from thence to the Prussian army, which was in sight, formed on the heights behind Ligny and St. Amand. He there communicated personally with Marshal Prince Blucher, and the head-quarters of the Prussian army.

"In the mean time the reserve of the allied army, under the command of the Duke of Wellington, arrived at Quatre Bras. The historian asserts that the Duke of Wellington had ordered these troops to halt at the point at which they quitted the Forêt de Soignes. He can have no proof of this fact, of which there is no evidence; and in point of fact the two armies were united about midday of the 16th of June on the left of the position of the allied army under the command of the Duke of Wellington. These troops forming the reserve, and having arrived from Brussels, were soon joined by those of the 1st division of infantry, and the cavalry; and notwithstanding the criticism of the Prussian historian on the position occupied by the army under the command of the Duke of Wellington, and of the march of the troops to join with the Prussian army, it is a fact, appearing upon

the face of the history, that the allied British and Netherlands army was in line at Quatre Bras, not only nearly twenty-four hours sooner than one whole corps of the Prussian army under General Bulow—which is attributed by the historian to an accidental mistake—but likewise before the whole of the corps under General Ziethen, which had been the first attacked on the 14th, had taken its position in the line of the army assembled on the heights behind Ligny, and having on their left Sombreffe.

"It was perfectly true that the Duke did not at first give credit to the reports of the intention of the enemy to attack by the valleys of the Sambre and the Meuse.

"The enemy had destroyed the roads leading through these valleys, and he considered that Buonaparte might have made his attack upon the allied armies in the Netherlands, and upon the provinces on the left bank of the Rhine, by other lines, with more advantage; but it is obvious that when the attack was made he was not unprepared to assist in resisting it; and, in point of fact, did, in the afternoon and in the evening of the 16th of June, repulse the attack of Marshal Ney upon his position at Quatre Bras, which had been commenced by the aid of another corps d'armée under General Reille. These were the troops which had attacked on the 15th, at daylight, the Prussian corps under General Ziethen; which corps the allied troops under the Duke of Wellington relieved in resistance to the enemy.

"The Prussian army, after a contest of some hours' duration upon the heights behind Ligny, having been under the necessity of retiring, that part of the allied army under the Duke of Wellington which was engaged at Quatre Bras maintained its ground at Quatre Bras, and even gained ground upon the enemy.

"The fields of battle were in sight of each other, and a report was received. But although the exact result of the battle was not known, it was judged that it had not been successful to the Prussian army. Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington was informed of some of the details at night. But still he considered that his own position being untouched, and the continued march of the troops under his command giving him an increase of strength at every moment, he felt the utmost confidence in the general result of the operations in progress.

"The Prussian army retreated towards Wavre. [N.B.—It

must be observed in the historian's account of these battles, that the corps of Reille was, at the commencement of the battle of Quatre Bras, joined with the troops of Ney. In point of fact, it was seen in the field.]

"That corps was, during the battle, ordered, and did march to its right, towards the main body of the French army. It was then halted and countermarched towards its original destination.

"The reasons for these eccentric movements are not known. Certain it is that the corps of Reille did not fire a shot after the commencement of the battle of Quatre Bras. That which it is reasonable to suppose is, that Marshal Ney had required that the corps of Reille should be sent back to him upon finding that he could make no impression upon the positions of the Duke of Wellington upon Quatre Bras, whose army was at every moment receiving reinforcements of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, from Nivelle and other places on its right.

"Shortly after daylight on the morning of the 17th, Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington's aide-de-camp, Colonel the Honourable Alexander Gordon, with two squadrons of Hussars, drove in the enemy's vedettes upon the ground of the Prussian contest on the afternoon of the 16th June. These retired into the villages of Ligny and St. Amand, &c., on the stream.

"Colonel Gordon communicated with General Grethen at Sombreffe, and ascertained exactly the line of retreat of the army under Field-Marshal Prince Blucher upon Wavre. As soon as the exact position of the Prussian army was ascertained, and the intentions of its general were known to the Duke of Wellington, he broke up from the position of Quatre Bras shortly before mid-day, in presence of the whole army of the enemy, without interruption or molestation, and ordered the march of the infantry of the army under his command to the ground in front of Waterloo, with the exception of the light troops at the outposts, with which and the cavalry the Duke remained on the ground at Quatre Bras.

"The Duke saw throughout the day of the 17th the movements of the Prussian army upon the field of the battle of the preceding day. No pursuit was made of the Prussian army, or movement of any kind made by the French army, till a late hour in the afternoon of the 17th. And indeed the account given by Marshal

Grouchy, in a pamphlet in his own defence published in the United States, shows that the account given in the history is as nearly as possible an accurate representation of what passed on the 17th. According to the reports in the allied army under the Duke of Wellington, the enemy did not move till between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, at which hour large masses of troops appeared on the Prussian field of battle. One body marched in the direction of Namur, another in the direction of Wavre, which last is supposed to have been the corps under the command of Marshal Grouchy. The largest body and the great mass of the cavalry moved down the high road from Sombreffe to Quatre Bras, towards the left of the British troops of the army of the Duke of Wellington, which still remained on that ground.

"These were put in motion and retired as soon as their outposts were touched by the enemy; and joined the main body of the army at that time posted in front of Waterloo.

"Here all the troops composing the army under the Duke of Wellington were assembled, excepting a small corps de réserve, still remaining at Hal, on the high road from Brussels to Mons. All the remainder, whether engaged at Quatre Bras on the 16th, or who had joined in the evening of the 16th, or had been turned off from Nivelle to Waterloo; and the troops falling back from the position at Quatre Bras, were in the position at Waterloo on the 17th in the evening.

"The whole of the Prussian army was at the same time in the position of Wavre.

"The two allied armies communicated with each other throughout the night of the 17th June, and the cavalry of General Bulow's Prussian corps of Marshal Prince Blucher's army was on the ground in front of Ohain, through the defile between the positions of the two armies, at daylight on the morning of the 18th.

"Thus, then, it appears by the report of this historian, that after the affairs at Ligny and Quatre Bras, the two allied armies were collected, each on its own ground, in presence of the enemy, having a short and not difficult communication between them, each of them in presence of the enemy, and between the enemy and Brussels; all their communications with England, Holland, and Germany, and all the important political interests committed to their charge, being secure.

"It has already been stated and believed, that the cavalry of Bulow's corps was seen on the heights in front of Ohain, between the allied army, under the command of the Duke of Wellington, and the defile leading to Wavre, at an early hour on the morning of the 18th.

"It is a curious fact, in elucidation of the movements of the allied army under Marshal Prince Blucher, that Marshal Grouchy has published in his defence, printed in the United States of America, a letter from Marshal Soult, addressed to him, dated the 18th June, at ten o'clock P.M., in which Marshal Soult states, '*Nous apercevions la cavalerie Prussienne*,' which was the very force seen by the Duke of Wellington, as stated, shortly after day-break on the morning of that day. It is a curious circumstance that this cavalry should not have been observed in the French army at an earlier hour than at one o'clock in the afternoon. It must be acknowledged that at that hour no knowledge existed at head-quarters that other troops had passed the defile, or had been engaged with the enemy on the left of the army under the command of the Duke of Wellington.

"The first thing heard of the operations of Marshal Blucher's army was a report brought from the left of the army under the Duke of Wellington, at about six o'clock in the evening, that at that moment the smoke of the fire of artillery could be perceived at a great distance beyond the right of the enemy's army, which firing was supposed at that time to be at Planchenoit.

"The report of the battle, made at the time by the Duke of Wellington, to the British and the allied governments of Europe, has long been before the public. In that report he does full justice to the exertions made by his colleague, the Prussian commander-in-chief, and by the general officers and troops to aid and support him, and to the effectual aid which they gave him. He states no details, excepting that the battle was terminated by an attack which he determined to make upon the enemy's position, in which he does not report that any Prussian troops joined, because, in point of fact, none were in that part of the field of battle. He states, however, that the enemy's troops retired from the last attack upon his position in great confusion; and that the march of General Bulow's corps, by Fischermont, upon Planchenoit and La Belle Alliance, had begun to take effect; and as he could

perceive the fire of his cannon, and as Marshal Prince Blucher, with a corps of his army, had touched the left of our line by Ohain, he determined upon the attack, which succeeded in every point.

"He added that he continued the pursuit till long after dark; and then discontinued it on account of the fatigue of the troops, which had been engaged during twelve hours, and because he found himself on the same road with Marshal Blucher, who assured him of his intention to follow the enemy throughout the night. He then adds:—'I should not do justice to my own feelings, or to Marshal Blucher and the Prussian army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance received from them. The operation of General Bulow on the enemy's flank was a most successful one. And even if I had not found myself in a situation to make the attack which produced the final result, it would have forced the enemy to retire if his attacks should have failed, and would have prevented him taking advantage of them if they should unfortunately have succeeded.'

"When the two Field-Marshals met on the same road it is well known that they embraced in the presence of their troops, and were cordial friends up to the day of the death of Prince Blucher. Surely the details of the battle might have been left as in the original official reports. Historians and commentators were not necessary. The battle, possibly the most important single military event of modern times, was attended by advantages sufficient for the glory of many such armies as the two great allied armies engaged. The enemy never rallied. Buonaparte lost his empire for ever. And the peace of Europe and of the world was settled on the basis on which it rests at this moment.

"It is impossible to close this paper without observing that Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington's letters, published by Col. Gurwood, afford proofs that he was convinced that the enemy ought to have attacked by other lines, rather than by the valley of the Sambre and of the Meuse. And that even up to the last moment, previous to the attack of his position at Waterloo, he conceived that they would endeavour to turn it by a march upon Hal. He states this in letters to the Duc de Feltre on the 15th

and the Duc de Berri and King Louis XVIII., at half-past three A.M. on the 18th June. And there are orders to his patrols of cavalry, on the nights of the 16th and 17th June, to observe particularly the enemy's movements towards Nivelle.

"It might be a nice question for military discussion, whether Buonaparte was right in endeavouring to force the position of Waterloo, or the Duke right in thinking that from the evening of the 16th he would have taken a wiser course if he had moved to his left, reached the high road leading from Mons to Brussels, and turned the right of the position of the allies by Hal.

"It is obvious that the Duke was prepared for such a movement."

END OF VOL. I.

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